
OBSERVATIONS
UPON
THE PRESENT STATE
OF
THE SCOTCH FISHERIES, &c.



John Gordon

OBSERVATIONS

UPON

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

THE SCOTCH FISHERIES,

AND THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

INTERIOR PARTS OF THE HIGHLANDS.

BEING

AN ESSAY ON THESE SUBJECTS,

GIVEN IN TO

THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND,

*And to which they were pleased to adjudge their Highest Prize-
Medal for the Year 1790.*

By P. WHITE, ESQ. *K*

OF THE GENERAL EXCISE-OFFICE, EDINBURGH.

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OBSERVATIONS

THE BRITISH STATE

THE SCOTCH FAMILIES



P R E F A C E.

IT has been usual for persons whom the Commonwealth of Letters did not recognize, and who have submitted their opinions to the ordeal of the Public, to introduce themselves to their Reader with an apology for their conduct. This mode of

proceeding has the resemblance of humility and modesty : It may be, however, doubted, (considering the natural proneness there is in mankind to self-approbation,) whether in general there is much *sincerity* in such apologizing introductions. At any rate, there is certainly a degree of absurdity, and perhaps of unfairness, in such seeming lowliness : It is unfair, because it
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is a kind of bespeaking the Reader's favour, by practising upon his passions: And it is absurd, because the author is thereby taking blame to himself before any one imputes it to him. For these reasons, the Author of the present performance has not followed the method usually adopted in Prefaces.

It will be learned from the title page of the following sheets, that

that they were originally wrote for the information and particular use of the Highland Society of Scotland. It is with the permission of that Society, that they now come abroad, and are submitted to the judgement of the Public.

The information upon which the arguments made use of in the present tract are founded,
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has been acquired by the experience of a ten years residence upon the North-West coast of Scotland ; and is likewise the result of a good deal of consideration bestowed upon the subject of the Fisheries. Our Reader will see, that the inferences which we have drawn, are almost totally different from those which have been drawn by others who have wrote before us, so far as
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the subject respects the Fisheries.
We however trust, they will be
found to be just, and to merit
some degree of consideration.



The Author, in discussing his
subject, had not any pleasing
prospect of praise before him:
He was obliged, consistent with
truth, and his own serious con-
viction,

viction, to represent a subject, which had become popular, in a less favourable point of view than it has been treated of by others.---As Praise was not, therefore, the Author's aim, Censure, he hopes, will the more readily spare him.

In these sentiments, he submits his Observations to the Reader.

EDINBURGH, }
JULY 18th, 1791. }

[illegible]

1864

OBSERVATIONS
UPON
THE PRESENT STATE
OF
THE SCOTCH FISHERIES, &c.
ADDRESSED TO
THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.

THE SOCIETY having, in an advertisement signed by their Secretary, and published in the Edinburgh Papers, desired information from such persons as were willing to give it, as to the Present State of the SCOTCH FISHERY, and the best means of promoting and improving the same: And the Society
having

having also, in their advertisement, desired that it might be stated by such persons, “ What the circumstances were
“ which should determine the situation
“ of the villages intended to be built
“ upon the coasts, and in the inland
“ parts of the Highlands ;—the proper
“ measures to be adopted by Govern-
“ ment,—by the Joint-Stock Com-
“ pany lately established by act of
“ Parliament,—by the Society,—or by
“ the proprietors of lands in the High-
“ lands, in forming such establishments,
“ —the encouragements proper to be
“ given,—the best method of provid-
“ ing the settlers with ground for
“ building, and other purposes,—and for
“ securing to them a supply of neces-
“ saries during the infancy of such
“ establishment ;” the present paper is
meant

meant as an endeavour to convey to the Society the information desired : But the author must crave liberty not to confine himself barely to the questions above proposed : and likewise he hopes the Society will pardon him, if, in speaking to these questions, he shall depart somewhat from the order in which they are stated. It will readily appear, to every gentleman into whose hands this paper may come, that in detailing facts, and making observations, upon a subject where the detailer can have no interest, and has no intention to mislead, the best way fully to understand him, and to profit by his information, is to allow him to deliver the account in such order as is most conformable to his own train of ideas. The author of the observations now to be offered shall de-

tain the Society with no farther preface or apology : If any of his remarks shall be deemed worthy of its attention, or shall be in any degree conducive to the welfare of the Fishery and the Country, he attains his whole aim in the present address.

To a feeling and rational mind, the subject now before us will appear of the greatest magnitude and importance, and replete with matter well worthy of the most serious investigation. Whether the subject is considered as affecting individuals, or as affecting the community at large, it is equally interesting. It concerns the well-being of nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants of this part of the United Kingdom, men who are by no means behind their neighbours

bours in either the qualities of body or mind, but whose labours are, at present, of very little use to the public, and of still less to themselves.—It was reserved for good men, lovers of their country, to meet and consult together, for the humane, munificent, and patriotic purpose, of benefiting their country, and cherishing her useful and forgotten Sons.

The order in which we propose to treat the matter now in hand, is, *first*, To give a detail of the *Present* State of the Scotch Fishery; in which we shall satisfy ourselves with a short view of that on the East Coast, as not being the immediate object of our enquiry, or affording so much field for observation; but shall dwell pretty largely upon the Fishery on the West

Coast, as being the *major* point in view ; in the course of making our observations upon which, we will take notice of the circumstances which should determine the situation of the intended villages, the encouragement proper to be given to the settlers, and the other requisitions contained in the Society's advertisement, intermingling, as we go along, such remarks and strictures as shall arise out of the subject : And to the whole we shall superadd remarks upon the interior parts of the Highlands, with a proposal for the improvement of that part of the country.

We might probably be excused, were we to omit altogether saying any thing of the Fishery upon the coast betwixt Berwick upon Tweed, and the entrance
to

to the Murray Frith. The coast of that tract of country is populous and rich: there is a constant market for all the fresh fish caught there, and the inhabitants have the command of shipping at all times, to transport such fish as they find it their account to send abroad or coastwise. Were the coasts of the Highlands as populous and fertile as this part of Scotland, the task would be easy to improve the Fisheries there: The coast we are speaking of is the best improved in the kingdom: there are, however, some of its advantages for carrying on the Fishery trade which are neglected. At Stirling, Perth, Aberdeen, and Spey, the Salmon-Fishery is prosecuted with much attention, and a pretty good supply sent from the two first places to the Edinburgh market.

ket ; a much larger of boiled salmon is, however, sent from all these places to the London market, preserved in vinegar, and packed in small tubs called kitts. Sometimes this fish has sold in London at two shillings and sixpence a pound ; at other times it has been sold as low as sixpence. When the price falls in London, they begin at the salmon-rivers to salt their fish for exportation : The ordinary average price these fish bring abroad, is about four pounds *per* barrel of forty two gallons, with the further advantage of a premium from Government of ^{four}~~two~~ shillings and sixpence *per* barrel.

At Dunbar, and upon a small extent of the coast on each side of the Frith of Forth, a shoal of herrings very often
set

set in about the beginning of Harvest, the greatest part of which are sold fresh, (mostly at Edinburgh) and fetch great prices. The Messrs Falls at Dunbar followed this fishery with great industry. Some of their herrings they smoaked in the Yarmouth way. These fish do not seem, however, to be so fit for curing into white or pickled herrings: they have not that sapid oily quality which the herrings on the West Coast lochs possess: When salted and kept for any length of time, they become rather insipid and dry.

It is perhaps needless to mention, that within these few years great exertions have been made in the Whale trade; and the towns of Leith, Aberdeen, Dundee, Montrose, &c. have
made

made very encouraging adventures in that way. *Lastly*, Although there are few herrings caught in the Frith of Forth, or upon the coast of the district betwixt that and the Murray Frith, yet there are a good many buffes fitted out from that part of the coast, particularly from Leith, for the Herring-fishery on the West Coast. About the time of Charles I. the inhabitants of the coasts of the Frith of Forth carried on a brisk trade, and fitted out a great number of buffes, the cargoes of which they exported mostly to the Baltic. Some of the towns which enjoyed this trade exhibit at this day spectacles of misery and wretchedness. The troubles which preceded and followed the King's death ruined the circumstances, and damped the

the adventurous spirit of these merchants. But there was, and still is, amongst their successors, a remain of that spirit for which their forefathers were so remarkable ; and it is only of late years that they have totally lost the trade of sending herrings to the ports in the Baltic, by these fish appearing upon the coasts of the countries there, of which the inhabitants availed themselves.

There is no part of Scotland where the white fishery for the fresh markets there is carried on with more industry, or better understood, than within the district we have mentioned ; We will even venture to go farther, and to affirm, that there is not in any part of Europe, (Holland excepted) better white fishers than those who follow that profession
upon

upon the East Coast of Scotland. Is it not therefore to be wondered at, that the merchants upon that coast, particularly at Aberdeen, Montrose, &c. have never made an attempt to send haddocks, cod, &c. to the London market? Such a trade would certainly yield great profit: The fish to be sprinkled with the purest of small salt, and might be either bought from the boat-fishers, or caught on board the swift sailing smacks, (in which they might be carried seasonably to London) as best suited circumstances: but the fishing on board the smacks would be the most certain method, because they could keep the sea to fish when the boats could not. It is the more surprising that this trade is not attempted, when it is considered, that the famous fishing-bank, called the

Long

Long Forties, runs alongst this part of the coast. We do not know that the inhabitants of the east coast of Scotland neglect any other local advantage they possess from their shores, excepting that we have now mentioned, unless, perhaps, that they do not pay that attention to their lobster-fishing which it deserves.

We shall now speak of the fishery on the coast of that track of country, which lies between the entrance to the Murray Frith, and the promontory called Cape Wrath, in the county of Sutherland ; in which we shall include the Orkney Islands. We shall omit saying any thing of the Shetland fishing, as probably not being particularly embraced by the Society, whose patronage,

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tronage, if we apprehend right, has the Highlands and Islands adjacent thereto, for its more immediate objects. Indeed, it is so far convenient to our purpose, that little remains to be proposed, for improving the fishery carried on upon the coast of Shetland: the industry of the inhabitants is great, and their success not disproportioned to it. We hope the day is at no great distance, when we shall see the like attention to the curing of good and merchantable fish among the natives of the Highland coast, as is amongst the inhabitants of Shetland, and their industry equally rewarded. Much praise is due to the gentlemen in Shetland; they are the very soul of the fishing there; it was first fostered by them, and they maintain it to this day, to the great advantage

vantage of themselves, and the natives their dependents, who are amongst the best *curers* of cod, ling, and other white fish in Scotland. The cod-fishing is more certain at Shetland than the herring, and the inhabitants of course turn their attention mostly to the former. At same time, such herrings as they do cure are the best of this country. This is an effect of their frequent communication with the Dutch.

The only fishing carried on in the Murray Frith, excepting the white fishing for the fresh markets at the towns of Cromarty, Elgin, Forres, Nairn, and Inverness, is the salmon-fishery at the rivers of Ness and Beauly, and a lesser salmon-fishing at the river of Findhorn. There is indeed a

small shoal of herrings usually appear (at least once a year) in the Frith ; and for some years back have constantly appeared at a narrow strait, which divides Inverness-shire from Ross-shire, called the Ferry of Kessock. These fish are, however, of so small a size, and so poor, as to be altogether unfit for curing ; they are therefore sold mostly at the market at Inverness, and are, in some scarce seasons, a welcome supply to the inhabitants of that country. The continuance of these fish is very uncertain ; sometimes only a few days, at other times for a month ; but they never appear in any considerable quantities.—The Society will perceive that this account of the Kessock herrings is very different from that given by a late writer of a neighbouring kingdom.

dom. He seems throughout to have viewed every thing in this country through a favourable glass. But the account here given is the truth, which, though not always so pleasant as fiction, is yet in the end more wholesome. But we return from this digression to our subject, and have to observe, that the fishing for salmon in the rivers above mentioned, is pushed with great industry; and the tacksmen of these rivers, who are sometimes also tacksmen of part of the salmon rivers in Angus, Aberdeen and Banff-shires, follow the same plan of boiling for the London market, or salting for exportation, at Inverness and Beaulie, as is done at the other rivers in Scotland.—It appears by the custom-house books at Inverness, that about the 1743, ten thousand bar-

rels of herrings were caught and cured in the Murray Frith, near the place where Fort George now stands: Since that time there has been no considerable take of herrings, fit for curing, in that Frith.

Within the Frith of Dornoch, and upon the whole of the east coast of Sutherland, there is not any fishing carried on that deserves almost to be mentioned. We know of no salmon river of any note within that district: An inconsiderable salmon-fishing is carried on at the Bonar, at the head of the said Frith; another one at Brora, and one at Helmsdale. Herrings have not appeared upon the east coast of Sutherland, in any great number, for a long time back: Indeed, should they appear,
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the natives are not possessed of tackling to kill them. This part of the coast abounds, however, in excellent white fish, particularly off Tarbett-nefs, and in a line from the south side of the Murray Frith to the north side of the Frith of Dornoch, and down towards the coast of Caithness. A good supply is afforded for the use of the country thereabouts. Much profit would arise to persons who would employ small vessels in fishing on that part of the coast for the London market; the fish to be sprinkled in the way we have already mentioned. This is the only improvement the fishery will admit of upon this part of the coast; but the attainment of it would be of great consequence to the country.

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The north-east coast of Caithness is not remarkable for a resort of herrings. White fish are plenty enough in common with the rest of the east coast of Scotland. Before we speak of the north-west coast of Caithness, which lies within the Pentland Frith, we shall just mention the Orkney Islands; and, with regard to them, we have only to observe, that herrings do not usually embay themselves amongst these islands, at least not in any considerable numbers; they have white fish enow there, and they have a very clear navigation for carrying them to London, if they inclined so to do. It would be no objection to the sale of these fish that they were powdered with salt; on the contrary, such fish are very agreeable when boiled, to the taste of most people.

Upon

Upon the north-west coast of Caithness, there is usually a good fishing for herrings: They appear there ordinarily in summer. At Wick and Staxigo, some buildings have been erected for curing red herrings, by merchants from Dunbar and Aberdeen. We do not know, however, that they have had much success. The coast there is so dangerous, and the weather, even in summer, so boisterous, that it is not safe to fish in either boats or vessels upon that coast, especially as there is not a proper harbour upon the whole of it. It is certainly a great object, to the gentlemen of the county of Caithness, to attempt to get at least one good landing place made upon that coast, which would greatly facilitate the fishing there, which, in our opinion, will never
do

do much good until that happens. It is the more to be regretted that there is not harbours upon that coast, that the Caithness herrings are a good deal larger than any got upon the rest of the whole coast of Scotland.

We are now arrived upon the west coast of Scotland, which may very properly be denominated the Great Fishing Grounds of Britain. This appellation belongs to the shores of the whole track of country, which lies between the north-western extremity of the coast of Caithness, and the Mull of Galloway, including also under that name the whole of the Hebrides. It is no part of our purpose in this paper to enter into geographical or historical accounts of these coasts and islands, as being
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ing a thing extraneous to the subject. Were it indeed allowable to introduce such descriptions here, they are already anticipated, in the large accounts published in the works of Pennant, Johnston, Anderson, Knox, &c. In short, so much has of late been wrote and said, (some true, some false) about the Hebrides, that it would be almost an impertinent task, to attempt a farther description of them. The geography of these remote countries and islands is now more familiar to some persons even in England, than that of the county of Middlesex.

We shall here, by the way, take the liberty to observe, that it is a pity that little benefit has accrued to the fishery or the country, from the (probably) well-

well-meant endeavours of some of the writers above mentioned. There were two great reasons for their failure in this respect: The first was, that the accounts they published were picked up by them in the course of their flying excursions, when they neither had time nor opportunity to study the genius and disposition of the natives of that country, to consider its trade, or to weigh its local advantages or disadvantages. Founded upon information thus obtained, voluminous productions have been obtruded upon the world full of inferences, as false as the propositions they flowed from, and containing extravagant expressions and contradictions. This last is the other cause of these writings not being attended to by the great in the other kingdom, and, of course,

course the subject of them not being taken up as a national concern. Knox says, in his *View of the British Empire*, Vol. 1st. page 121st, "The tenants are
"oppressed by the proprietors of lands
"in the Highlands."—Again, page 123d of same volume, "That the proprietors
"of lands in the Highlands are Gamblers and Horse-Jockies," and, page 127th, same volume, "That Highland
"estates are the seats of oppression,
"anguish and wild despair."

We shall suppose an English gentleman, a Member of Parliament, sitting in his closet, with Mr Knox's book in his hand: when he comes to the passages cited, he lays down the book for a moment: his meditation will be very short; and its odds but it produces the following foli-

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loquy:

loquy : “ If what is here said be true, (and from the confident manner in which it is asserted, I would incline to believe it is true) I think I perceive this business to be a bite. If Parliament shall proceed to give away the public money to encourage those oppressed men to fish, why, what benefit to them shall it be? it will only increase the rapacious demands of these gamblers and horse-jockies upon them.” The English member muses a little, perhaps, and begins to get rid of this difficulty, by reflecting, that, in good policy, a partial evil may be permitted, when it draws along with it a general good. That is to say, no matter, whether the *actual* catchers of the fish are benefited or not : If *they* are encouraged, fish will be caught; and of course the trade
and

and prosperity of the country promoted. The gentleman, thus again reconciled to the subject, takes up the book, and reads on, perhaps, till he comes to page 377. of it, where the author says, “ That
“ the *want of sale* was one of the prin-
“ cipal causes of the failure of the
“ British White Herring Company, es-
“ tablished in 1750, by men of unlimit-
“ ed property, aided by a bounty of
“ 50 s. *per* ton from Government,
“ without the rivalship of Ireland.” The Member is startled, and a second time lays down the book: He immediately says to himself, “ I have now read 377 pages of this author ; and I have been all along understanding his drift to be, to stimulate a spirit of adventure in the Fishery.—I did not well understand him, I confess, when he enabled

me, by his statement about the oppressions of Highland proprietors, to draw a conclusion unfavourable to his own design. I thought indeed I had relieved myself from that difficulty ; but he has snatched the hope, by raising an insuperable objection ; for he tells me, unequivocally, that there was not a market for British herrings, even when Ireland caught none. I know that now prodigious quantities of herrings are caught by the Irish ; I know, likewise, that since the 1750, we have acquired no new colonies to which we may export our herrings ; nor have we, by any new and superior modes of curing them, procured to ourselves a preference in the European markets. I perceive the whole business to be a mistake. If we have not a proper market
for

for even the Herrings we now catch, why give money to encourage the catching more, until new markets are discovered? That would be needless, indeed: I will read no more: This author either does not understand his subject, or is endeavouring to impose upon his reader." With this, the well meaning gentleman, who probably would have given his support in the Senate, to any proper plan for encouraging the Highland Fisheries, throws down Mr Knox's book, never more to take it up, or to speak favourably of the subject of it.

Inconsistencies and mis-statements could likewise be pointed out, in the writings of the other gentlemen who have visited that country, but it would answer

no particular purpose to do so here.—
Mr Knox having, however, exceeded
them all, in the heedless and ranting
manner of his detail, we thought it not
improper to step aside a little from our
subject to mention him. We are much
afraid he has done hurt to that, which
(we have the charity to believe) he
meant to serve. At the same time, it
may not be improper to observe, as a
necessary caution in reading his perfor-
mances, that Mr Knox was originally
a bookseller in London, in which pro-
fession he was very successful.—After
having realised 10,000 l. he quitted
Bookselling, and commenced *Bookmak-
ing*. Mr Knox knew from experience,
that the sale of a book did not so much
depend upon its containing truth, as
upon its being judiciously decorated
with

with matter which would excite curiosity. It is to be feared that his anxiety for the sale of his book has kept pace with, if not exceeded, his anxiety for the Fishery, although the latter was his great cry. Nothing can shew this more, than the wanton manner in which he attacks the characters of individuals.— Knox knew, as a bookfeller, that scandal is always read; and that plain truth is too uniform, to please the taste of an age so remarkable for the pursuit of variety.

Having taken the liberty to make this digression, we proceed again to take notice, that the whole West coast of Scotland abounds with fish of different kinds, and, in the proper season, with innumerable quantities of herrings.—

rings.—As the herrings are more easily caught than any other kind of Fish, are fitter for receiving salt so as to keep, and are to be found in greater numbers than any other kind of fish; of course, from the very earliest accounts of civilization in this country, the catching these fish has drawn attention from the inhabitants of the country; not only from those resident upon the coasts where they are caught, but from those upon the East coast of the kingdom, who have sailed thither to take them, from very early periods of the Scottish history. It is apprehended that it would be a needless task to describe minutely, here, the method of catching the herrings. It is generally known, that it is in the night time they are easiest killed, by means of very long nets, reaching almost

almost to the bottom of the water: When these nets are drawn up, the herrings are ordinarily found strangled in the meshes or loops of them: When thus found, they present perhaps the most beautiful appearance in all animated nature, being enamelled, gilded, painted, infinitely beyond every thing which the most glowing colours, and happy pencil can describe: Thus secured, they are deprived of their guts: the melt and roan are however allowed to remain: Then they are salted and barrelled up; and, when so cured, with cleanliness and care, are an acceptable boon from the all-gracious Author of Nature.—Unhappily, however, in this country, we have not yet learned, or are unwilling to learn, how to preserve, to the greatest advantage, this gift of the Creator.

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There is as much difference to the palate, in eating a herring taken out of a barrell at Amsterdam, and one taken out of a barrell at Greenock, as is between the relish of a piece of pork, part of a swine fed at a meal-mill in Aberdeenshire, and a piece of the like creature, fed amongst the sea wreck and shell-fish, on the coast of Ireland. On the cause of this difference, we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

We now proceed to state to the Society, in a brief manner, the present posture of the Fishery for herrings upon the coasts of the West-Highlands; but, in doing this, it will perhaps be better to go a little back. It is with very great pleasure that we begin by acquainting the Society, that from
good

good information, it appears, that the inhabitants of to the town of Stornaway in the Island of Lewis (a property of the Seaforth family,) have, with great industry and perseverance, followed the fishing ever since the union of the two kingdoms, and with exemplary success. Their ancestors followed this business from very early times, of which there are sufficient monuments remaining: but it was after the Union that the merchants in Stornaway had full scope for their laudable pursuits: then it was, that the herrings which they caught, might lawfully be sent to the British West-India Islands, and be exported thither, and to all other lawful places, attended with the encouragement of a bounty: from that time, the people of Stornaway have been gradually

gradually advancing. Some twenty-five or thirty years ago, all the fish they caught were carried for them to their port of destination by hired vessels. Now they can shew in their harbour, in the fishing time, upwards of thirty sail of stout handsome vessels, from twenty to seventy tons burden, all their own property. Their town is a pattern of neatness and cleanliness; and when a stranger enters their convenient mansions, he will have set before him a piece of well-dressed Highland mutton, some choice fish, and a bottle of port, the produce of the hospitable landlord's industry. To the everlasting credit of these industrious fishers and merchants, it falls to be recorded, that they have made their pleasant hamlet rise into view, and display
upwards

upwards of an hundred slated houses, besides inferior ones, from their gain from the sea. Thus Stornoway flourished, though it even laboured once under some disadvantages, the particulars of which, as they would bring the names of individuals above board, we choose to avoid. But the case is widely different now; Stornoway has for its Lord, such a one as it long has wished for and deserved; even the noble gentleman who loves his country and his friends. The first thing, in our opinion, which will interrupt the prosperity of this rising settlement, will be the overdoing of the Herring Fishery upon the coasts of Britain, of which there is great danger. Of this we will have occasion to speak more largely hereafter.

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Thus

Thus Stornoway stood alone for a long period, as the only fishing station upon that part of the coast: But in the year 1776, certain merchants from Liverpool and the Isle of Man, began to erect houses at Isle Martin in Lochbroom, in the county of Ross, and at Loch-Inver in the county of Sutherland, for curing herrings after the Yarmouth way; that is, smoking them into red herrings: At same time, a customhouse with proper officers, was established at Ullapool, two miles from the first mentioned place. Five or six years afterwards, some merchants at Inverness erected houses for the like purpose at Gairloch in Ross-shire, and also shades, and other convenient houses for curing cod, which are caught in great numbers upon a bank which
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begins at the mouth of that loch : and five years ago, a merchant at Stornoway, with some partners in London, erected considerable buildings upon the Island Taurera, a small holm upon the coast of the Cromarty estate in Wester Ross, about eight miles from the new village of Ullapool. Mr Rodrick Morison, the acting partner of this company, has great merit, for having planned and conducted this undertaking, which bids fair to be a thriving fishing station, being in the centre of the best of the Lochbroom fishing grounds. Indeed this piece of service done to that country, is the least part of Mr Morison's merit ; the public are indebted to him for his general zeal and industry, which holds forth an excellent example to the inhabitants of that part of

the coast; and as he carries on different branches of trade, he has introduced into that neighbourhood a spirit for dealing, and has given them, by his example, a pattern of punctuality in making payments. The good conduct of a man of note, is of vast consequence in the Highlands. This is well known to every one who is acquainted with that country.

It would be of little service to the views of the Society, for the author of this paper to describe to them all the different lesser fishing stations upon the West coast, with which he is acquainted: there are numbers of shades for curing fish, and small store-houses for salt, casks, &c. all along the coast, and in the islands of the West of Scotland; particularly at Loch-

Tor-

Torridon, a little to the southward of Gairloch. In the island of Lewis, many of the farmers in the remote parts of it fish for cod &c. which they sell to the Stornoway merchants; these have convenient houses erected upon their respective farms for facilitating the trade.

The most considerable fishing upon all the coasts of Britain, for cod and ling, is in the neighbourhood of these islands, viz. upon that ground called the Mother Bank. This bank runs between the Island of Mull on the east, and Barra and South Uist on the west. The best fishing is off Barra-head, where a number of vessels resort every season. The merchants at Peterhead, and some people at Aberdeen, have

made considerable profit of this fishing. The people in Campbeltown and Rothsay, and in the Clyde, rather prefer fishing for herrings than for cod &c; whereas on the East coast they prefer the white fishing. The reasons for the conduct of each are plain, viz. in the Clyde and other places in the west, the demand for herrings, owing to their West India trade, is brisker than for white fish; while, upon the East coast, where there is no American trade, it is *vice versa*. The salmon fishing upon the West coast is of no great consequence: this is owing to the short run of their rivers. There may be some of that fish caught in the river Nith, and in the Solway, and at Air; but they are no considerable object.

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The most of the herring fishing trade of Scotland, is carried on by means of vessels called *busses*, fitted out from Campbeltown, Rothsay, Greenock, Port-Glasgow, and other places in the river Clyde and its vicinity. There has been considerable profit derived to these towns from this trade, which is encouraged by a bounty from Government, of thirty shillings *per* ton measurement of the vessels.—A further aid is granted by the public, in a premium of 2 s. 8 d. for each barrel of white herrings exported to foreign parts, and other premiums upon different kinds of fish, which it would be needless here to enumerate.

At the close of the American war, the trade of fishing upon the West coast
stood

stood much in the way we have described it. The troubles of the then preceding times, had damped the trade of the Western fishing towns; and at the end of the said war, this country altogether could reckon but few buffes upon the fishing. Since that time, the number of buffes are almost doubled. This was partly an effect of the peace, and partly owing to the laudable endeavours of certain patriotic individuals, who, by their talents and influence, called forth public attention to the Fishery: Hence a measure arose, which throws a lustre upon the annals of the present day: This was the establishment and incorporation of the Joint-stock Company, for the special purpose of extending, protecting, and encouraging the Fishery—and the incorporation
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of the Society, to which the present paper is addressed. By the exertions of the members of those associations, both in their individual and collective capacities, certain laws, which were justly deemed impolitic, as tending to cramp the Fishery, (though meant at first to secure the revenue), were abrogated and annulled, and some very liberal indulgences were granted by Parliament to the trade, which have been productive of good consequences. What these were, it is needless here to recapitulate; it is presumed they are known to every member of the Society, and therefore, we shall not here enter upon them. We shall likewise refrain from entering into a minute description of what has been done by the Joint-stock Company, at their villages of Toppermorry and Ullapool,

Ullapool, as things already known to the Society, and therefore needless to trouble it with.

Under the apprehension, that the intentions of the Society in requiring information regarding the Fishery, would be better answered by making remarks upon the most important parts of it, and pointing out improvements, than by long and minute details of its present situation, we have abridged our accounts of it as much as we could, consistent with our said purpose; and we now proceed to close this part of our design, by taking notice of the present state of the Fishery in general.

The fishery of most importance to Scotland is undoubtedly the herring. We
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have assigned our reasons for this uncontroverted opinion, upon the 43d and 44th pages of this paper. If ever there was a game of chance in the world, it is in fishing for herrings. To-day they are to be found in swarms baffling the power of numbers to reckon, or almost the mind to conceive: to-morrow they are gone, and their place knows them no more. How idle then is the doctrine of some, who have lately had the hardiness to advance in their publications this position, viz. "*That that trade which cannot be carried on without the aid of a Government, ought to be abandoned.*" Some who have brought forth these doctrines think themselves philosophers. It may be so: But the world now-a-days has more wit, than to allow closet speculatists to systemize for it, in matters

ters of trade. Has it been out of any treatise on trade by any philosopher or philosophers, that successful merchants have learned their lessons? or will any minister of state ever be mad enough to adopt the maxims of such sophists? We have happily no use for their philosophy in this question: it is so plain that the simplest man understands it. There cannot be a doubt, that if there was not an aid from Government, two thirds at least of those persons who fit out herring buffes, would drop the trade. If this supposition is granted, (and there is the best reason to think it will,) it follows, that by the plan of the philosophers, this country (the independence of which, is so nearly allied to the respectable state of its navy), would for the sake of saving a paltry sum, forgoe the
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the advantages arising from the supply of seamen, which the fishery nurses up, and the advantages which the Community at large derive from the fishery, as at present carried on. It is to be hoped the wisdom of the Government of this country, will avoid the adoption of such a pernicious measure. The loss which would thereby arise to the country, whether considered in a political, or commercial view, is so plain, that it requires no philosophy, but only a little common understanding, to pronounce the position advanced by these grave sages, to be so absurd, as not to deserve a serious refutation.

We have said, that the fishing-trade is precarious: Our observation is verified, in the indifferent success of it for

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some years back. There is no body however can doubt, but the bounty paid for encouraging the herring-fishery in vessels, is well compensated to the country, by the strength derived to our navy, from the services of the seamen nursed up in the said trade, although a single herring was never to be caught by them.

There has not been any great fluctuation in the price of herrings, for the last seven years. Upon an average, white-herrings may have sold for 24 s. *per* barrel, and red for 30 s. The quantity of white-fish taken for the last seven years, has been much the same as for the seven years preceding. And the average price of mud-fish, (or barrelled salted cod,) in London, has been,
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in that period, about a guinea and a half *per* barrel. The quantity of dry-fish exported from this country is not very considerable : They may have fetched, upon an average for the last seven years, 20 s. *per* cwt.

We have now finished all we mean to say, in this stage of our design, by way of detailing the present state of the Scotch Fishery : What will hereafter follow, shall principally contain our opinion and observations upon the subject.

In reflecting deliberately upon this business, it will be found to be involved in much more difficulty, than at first would be apprehended : The result of a careful consideration of the subject,

is not so flattering as we would wish. Truth ought, however, to be superior to every consideration ; and we are impelled by it to acknowledge, that after weighing all arguments, *pro* and *con*, the following uncomfortable paradox arises, viz. *Much* farther encouragement given to the herring-fishery, will not *at present* benefit that fishery ; and, if the encouragements are carried *a great deal* farther, they will utterly ruin the trade. But the same research into the subject, which presents this gloomy picture, affords us, in return, the following pleasing proposition, viz. The encouraging the fisheries, *though even carried too far*, will most certainly benefit the Highlands and its coasts. The latter is a very clear position, and is satisfactory so far.

Certainly

Certainly it was the belief of those gentlemen, who compose the Honourable Societies which have taken so laudable a concern in the matter now before us, that, while they benefited the Highland-coast, they at the same time advanced the fisheries; and their institution, purpose, and intention, was to embrace both objects, which were judged to be reciprocal: But upon a narrow examination of the business, we are humbly of opinion, that these two interests are *at present* almost separate, and that it will require a steady hand to prevent the former from encroaching upon the latter; an event, the evil consequences of which the Highlands itself would share in at last; this, too, may seem paradoxical.

To come to the point, then, we shall first observe, that it is perfectly well

known, that the profits arising from the trade of catching and barreling, what is called pickled herrings, are not very great, even although the business is at present upheld by an aid from Government, which is a natural consequence of the very limited sale for these fish; excepting at home, and in our own West-India islands, we have *no market for them*. The merchants upon the continent of Europe will not look at them, if there is a Dutch herring in the market; and when there is no Dutch competitors, the Danes, Swedes, and other Northern fishers, are always at hand, ready, infinitely to undersell us. Even the Irish, when their own herring-fishing fails, do not apply to us, but to the Danes, &c. who serve them cheaper. The only British herrings which can shew their face in the

the European markets, (and even the few only within the Mediterranean, for the Dutch and our other neighbours have plenty of them,) is that manufacture of them called red herrings. Before however these can be cured, considerable and expensive buildings must be erected, which is very unsuitable to the circumstances of the greatest part of those people, who carry on the Scotch Herring Fishery.

This account it is impossible to controvert; and the reflection which naturally follows it is, that by too fondly giving way to the heedless clamour, and ill-grounded expectations, which the Fisheries, as a popular subject, have given rise to, and excessively encouraging the trade in question, the mark
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may be over-shot, and the child only meant to be fondled, may be crushed to death in the over eager embrace.

It is a truth, and it demands the most serious consideration, that there is not a market for even the fish that are caught in some years under the present encouragements: even the Dutch themselves, superior as their herrings are, find difficulty enough in disposing of them; it is an undeniable fact, that their herring trade is much upon the decline. All Northern Europe is now engaged in the herring Fishery: hence the market is glutted, and the profits gone to almost nothing.

Let it be asked at a bus-fisher, and he will frankly tell you, that in a bad fishing

ing year, when he has made only half a cargo, he cleared more money by the adventure, than when the herrings were plenty, and a full cargo has been made by him. Thus, the trade may, and is in danger of being over-done. It would be well if such measures were taken, as to make the interests of the Highlands and the Fisheries reciprocal; and this we think could be fully effected, by a wise and moderate protection and encouragement, given to both. It is very allowable to suppose, that, allured by an excessive encouragement, such numbers will attempt the fishing trade, that the profits, if any, will be too inconsiderable to induce any person to follow it; of course the trade will be lost to the country. In this case, although the Highlands behaved, for ever after,

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to feel the good effects of what has already been done there by the Joint-stock Company, in collecting the people together in towns, yet the falling off of the Fishery, would be a mortal wound to the prosperity of these young settlements, in a country where there is no great scope to push agriculture, and where they must expect to improve their capitals, rather out of the sea than out of the land. How happy would it be, were things carried to the point of propriety and no farther; then would both the Highland villages and the Fishery, live and grow up together, to the immortal honour of those good patriots, whose virtue first led them to turn their attention to their forgotten fellow-men, in those remote and uncomfortable regions. But even the disastrous event we have
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been supposing, should it ever happen, would not *totally* root up the good effects of the measures already taken for improving the Highland coasts: individuals might lose by the failure of the Fishing, but the Community at large would derive the greatest benefit from the civilization of that country, which, whether the Fisheries succeed or not, will in all probability be the consequence of the experiments now making, of collecting the people there together in towns.

In all the publications which have been of late sported upon the subject of the Fishery, the great cry has been—*Get fish at any expence.—The country will never be right till its Aquatic treasures are produced.—Push the Fishery to its*

its utmost extent: it is a mine of national wealth &c. One of these writers, (Mr Knox, as we have already stated), awkwardly and inconsistently, (though very truly) blunders out the important fact, that the want of market for our fish is sadly to be apprehended. *There is the rub.* If this is true, all the enthusiasm which has been displayed about pushing the fishery goes for nothing, and only shows, that those Gentlemen, who have wrote so much upon it, would have done better, had they reflected more, and wrote less. Luckily for the country, every body was not so sanguine as these gentlemen were, or at least pretended to be. The Fisheries are no doubt a most important object to this country, and every *proper* indulgence and encouragement ought to be given
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to the prosecuting them; but every judicious person will at once see, from the hints we have given, that caution is as much necessary, in fixing the bounds of that encouragement, as in administering a medicine, of which a certain quantity would preserve the patient's life, but more than that might kill him,

In this place, it may not be improper, in defence of the conclusions we have been drawing, to introduce certain additional premises, which we imagine will not be controverted. They are these: The Americans have plenty of herrings upon their coasts: they can sail freely to any part of Europe for salt; and their country abounds with wood fit for curing *red herrings*. Thus provided, it may be soon looked for,

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that they will attempt to supply Europe with fish, and ruin *our* market for the above mentioned herrings in the Italian countries.

Thus we are of opinion, (contrary to the current of popular buzz) that it is possible to do *too much* towards encouraging the Fisheries. But we beg to be understood, that it is by no means insinuated that the steps already taken for that purpose, are all that the trade demands, and that the country should there stop. At same time, we freely own our opinion, that there is not a great deal to do, of all that is necessary, or even safe, in the present state of the trade, towards encouraging the Fisheries.

Having said thus much, it behoves us
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to submit to the Society *our* opinion, as to the kind of encouragements proper to be given to the trade, and the extent of those encouragements.

In the historical accounts of population and trade, we find that mankind, (not only individuals but nations) have ordinarily been benefited by the examples of each other.—Venice aimed to be what Carthage once was: and the seven United Provinces made Venice, as much as they could, their model, not in Government only, but in trade and manufactures, and in maxims in trade. No one can doubt, that the Dutch are at this day better acquainted with the methods of curing fish, especially herrings with salt, than any other people in the world: we

have stated that the British herrings have a confined sale; the *first* reason for this, is, that the Dutch herrings are always preferred to ours at market, for their goodness; and the *second*, that the herrings of other foreigners get preference for their cheapness. The endeavouring to do away the first mentioned evil, (which will virtually relieve us also of the second) is therefore, in our opinion, a first step in the improvement of our Fisheries; for, as has been said, to what purpose do we catch fish, if we cannot vend them? although our fish curers were able to send such herrings to market as the Dutch do, there would still be occasion for the caution we have recommended in encouraging the Fisheries; for even in that case, the Dutch would still get preference by under-

underselling us. This they are enabled to do, from their national genius for parsimony and sobriety. Thus, the Dutch will always have the upper-hand of us in the herring trade. The only mark therefore left for *us*, is to endeavour to beat the Danes, Swedes, &c. out of the market (as the Dutch at present do both us and them) by bringing better (for we cannot bring cheaper) commodities there. If our fish-curers wish to fish, it would be wisdom in them to endeavour to learn to cure their fish; seeing their doing so, is the *only* chance they have to sell them to strangers, or to induce our West India planters to enlarge their orders for herrings. Were the British as good as the Dutch herrings, the sugar planters would order double the quantity they do: not

only the negroes, but the white people in the West Indies, would think them good food.

The Society will probably be surprised to be informed, that the superiority which the Dutch have over us in the fish trade, is owing, in great part, to the cleanliness and care with which they pack their fish, and the want of these requisites in our fish-curers. To be brief, the whole matter is this: In Holland the wisdom of the Government has appointed, at the principal ports in the territories of the republic, officers with suitable salaries, whose business it is to see certain laws of the country, relating to the packing of fish duly executed. These laws ordain, that when herrings arrive in Holland from the fishing,

fish, they shall be all unpacked out of the barrels in which brought, and cleaned and assorted. It would only consume time, to enter here into a minute account of the Dutch process of curing. Suffice it to say, it is simple; and the whole secret is, cleanliness and exactness; cleanliness, in refreshing the herrings from all the blood and dirt, which the first salting had extracted from them; and exactness, in sorting them into casks, according to their several qualities and sizes. The casks are marked by the proper officers on the head, to authenticate their quality, contents, and country; and thus made ready for market, they recommend themselves wherever they are sent. So wisely jealous are the Dutch, of the character of their fish, that it is unlawful

lawful for any of their subjects to carry fish to market from the fishing grounds, without first landing and repacking them in Holland, in the manner described. The Scotch practice forms a complete contrast to that here described; of which any one may satisfy himself, who shall ever see the dirty method of managing herrings at Greenock, the principal mart for these fish in the kingdom. In our opinion, an attention to this important circumstance, is a step absolutely necessary, in the very first instance, for encouraging the Fisheries. The necessity of it, after what we have said upon the confined sale of British herrings, must strike every one: it is clear, from what has been said, that additional encouragements bestowed upon the Fishery, would operate

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rate contrary ways, until markets are opened for the fish: It is as clear, that markets cannot be found for the fish, until they are able, by their quality, to recommend themselves. Therefore we argue, that an attention to the circumstance in question, must precede every farther encouragement of moment.

In considering how the purpose here aimed at could be brought about, we can see no plan more feasible, than the bringing over into this country, and settling, at the Joint-stock Company's villages, a few natives of Holland, who have had experience in curing herrings, for the purpose of instructing the cures there in the Dutch method. As there would not be occasion for many of these Dutch,
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it might be done in a private manner, and offence to the Government of that country accordingly avoided. Indeed, so few would be needed, that the measure, should it ever be known in Holland, could hardly excite any jealousy. We suppose the expence necessary to entice these people to come over, and to remain in this country, could not be a great inconveniency to the funds of the Joint Stock-Company, especially if (as is not to be doubted,) the Company received the aid of the Society. If these Dutchmen did their duty, and if the curers upon the West Coast paid proper attention to the directions of the foreigners, the probable consequences would be, that better herrings would soon appear at the Scotch market, from the Company's villages, than those caught

caught by the buffes belonging to the merchants at Port-Glasgow, Greenock, Campbeltown, &c.; and this again would bring it about, that these people would, in self-defence, be obliged to have recourse to alluring some Dutch curers to come in amongst them. This last would be a salutary measure for the country, and would flow from the plan we have now recommended. It is natural to suppose, that it would be only *gradually*, that the curers in Scotland would discover the necessity of procuring Dutch teachers; which would be a convenient circumstance, as by that means the Dutch could be brought into this country by piece-meal unnoticed, and so offence to the Government of their country avoided.

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We have already declared our sentiments, that, in the present state of the trade, more exertions in favours of the fishery, are almost precluded. There is very little more left for us to say upon that part of our subject, *by itself*. As has been already stated, various hindrances and obstructions in the way of the fishery, contained in former revenue-laws, are now cleared away. The bounty from Government, upon the tonnage of the busses, is equitable and liberal, as is the premiums upon the fish exported: The trade was never less cramped than it is at this day. The encouragements are fitting, and ought to animate the fishers to aim at curing their fish properly, as the best means to preserve a trade, which, from the combined circumstances of great indulgences

gences granted to it at home, and the indifferent character of our herrings abroad, is in some danger of being overdone or lost.

We now come to speak of the Highland coast, and that country in general, and its concerns, which immediately brings to our view, the establishments set on foot by the Joint-stock Company, in their villages of Toppermorry and Ullapool. And here we cannot refrain from dropping our subject for a little while, to express our warm and hearty approbation of the truly virtuous conduct of those worthy patriots, who have thrown lustre on the times we live in, by their generous and amiable conduct; evincing themselves at once the friends of mankind and of their

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country. Their names will be mentioned by grateful posterity, when the blessings which their wise and praiseworthy counsels have planted, are matured and ripened, and when they themselves are no more.

The Author of this paper is not acquainted with the situation of the village of Toppermorry. The situation of the other settlement at Ullapool, he has had occasion to know well: he has traversed a great part of the West coast, and resided ten years in that country. He must certainly say, that those who advised the Company to set down a village at Ullapool, did not mislead it; for the circumstances which should determine the situation of a village upon the coasts of the West Highlands, from our knowledge

ledge of that country, meet all together in the situation of Ullapool.

But to be better understood, and to answer in this place one of the requisitions of the Society's said advertisement, we shall state, *what in our opinion are the circumstances*, which should determine the situation of a village on the coasts of the Highlands.

The *first* thing, therefore, in our judgment, which should determine the preference in favours of any one place as the stance of a fishing village, upon the coasts of the West Highlands, is, that such place, or its vicinity, shall be noted, by long experience, as the principal resort of fish (particularly of herrings, upon that part of the coast).

This consideration ought to out-weight every other one; and though other places might possess all other requisites for the stance of a village, yet, if not in the neighbourhood of a good fishing ground, a village, in the present state of the Highland coast, should not be built there, but at the best fishing place, provided it be not impracticable, from the face of the country, (which is the case at some places on the West coast) to set down a village, and to accommodate the settlers with even small gardens there.

Next, if there are two or more places, equally remarkable for the greatest resort of herrings upon that part of the coast, surely the preference should be given to that place, where there is the greatest

greatest quantity of arable, or at least improveable, level land.

Again, if there are two or more places upon any one part of the coast, equally noted for these two advantages, the preference no doubt should be given to the one, from which a road to communicate with the Low-country could be cheapest made. Oeconomy is highly necessary: and therefore preference should be given to the cheapest road, though longest, provided the difference of distance be not attended with any considerable disadvantage to the inhabitants of the proposed village. It is almost needless to explain here how the longest road may be cheapest. Every gentleman of the Society knows that the Highland country is incumbered

with rocks, and intersected by many rivulets, and that a mile of road in some places, will cost more money than to make twenty in other places. But from what we have said, it must not be inferred, that we propose placing the villages at a distance from the Low-country, rather than near it. This is the farthest thing imaginable from our meaning. What we urge is, that a cheap long road, would probably be more convenient for the funds destined to the encouragement of the Fishery, than a short, but expensive one: If any place upon the West coast is found, possessed of the two first qualifications we have mentioned, and from whence a road could be made, cheaper than from any other part possessed of like qualifications, the shortness of the road would enhance

enhance the value of the situation, and it ought immediately to be made choice of for the site of a village.

Next, if there are two or more places upon that part of the coast, which shall be equally in possession of all the local advantages we have mentioned, we would prefer the one for building our village upon, which should be known to be best frequented by haddocks, and other small fish ; because these would afford some subsistence to the inhabitants of the village, when the herring-fishing should happen in any one year to fail.

Lastly, we reckon the neighbourhood of peat-moss in one place, and not in another, if both are equally possessed of the local advantages already mentioned,

a good reason for preferring the place where moss is found, to the other, for building a fishing village upon.

Should all these local advantages meet, in any situation upon the Highland coast, we may safely pronounce, that such situation is the very place proper for building the proposed village upon. To the great credit of the advisers of the measure of building there, the village of Ullapool will be found to be possessed of all these advantages. It is not only the best situation for a village, upon the northern district of the West coast, but (if we are not misinformed) it is the very best, from at least Toppermorry all along the whole range of the West coast, to the North-eastermost point of this part of the united kingdom.

dom. Ullapool is in the very centre of the best fishing grounds for herrings in Scotland: there is a fine flat of land there, most of it arable, and the rest very improveable. The making a road from it to the Low-country, will be cheaper and easier, than from any other part of the North-West coast we know. In the bay of Ullapool (a smooth land-locked corner of Loch-broom) some of the finest haddocks and other kind of fish are to be found at almost all seasons of the year, within two or three hundred yards of the doors of the residents there; and there is, in the hills at the back of the level land at Ullapool, moss inexhaustible. If, therefore, the village of Ullapool does not thrive, there must be very small hopes, that one built upon any other
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part of the West coast will succeed.

In what we have said respecting the circumstances, which should weigh principally in setting down a village upon the West Highland coast, we apprehend our reasons for the estimation in which we have held each circumstance, and the consequent priority of order we have placed it in, are obvious, without any farther explanation; but our making so small account of moss, for the necessary article of fuel, as to consider it as the *last* and *least* object, to be taken into the reckoning, in selecting a situation for a village, may require to be accounted for.

The Society is not to be informed, that the climate of the whole of the
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West coast of Scotland, is boisterous, and subject to great rains. This circumstance is very unfavourable to the gaining of peats: The making of fuel from moss is one of the hardest pieces of work the Highlanders have to encounter. They dig their peats to-day: Some days after they lift them from the ground to dry: next day a hurricane of wind and rain throws them all down: They are set up again, and again share the same fate. By this time the season is gone, and the poor people are obliged to put the peats in a wet state up into stacks. Thus their time is consumed, their bodies toiled, and, after all, their purpose is not attained; for the peats stacked wet will not burn, and they are consequently in great misery, with smoke and cold, through the winter.

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For these reasons, we look upon the neighbourhood of moss, to be the very *least* consideration in choosing the stance of a village. Coals may be furnished to the inhabitants of such village perhaps cheaper (every thing considered) than peats, though they should even have the moss at their doors. But, at any rate, it would be extremely proper in the Joint-stock Company, in the present infancy of their village, to lay in a stock of coals at Ullapool. Were a considerable fishing to strike up there, during the time the people were at work with their peats, (which very often happens) they would be reduced to the dilemma, of either losing the fishing, or starving with cold through the winter; both these inconveniencies would be prevented, by the Company having
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on hand a quantity of coals, ready to answer such an emergency.

We shall now beg leave to make some observations upon what the Joint-stock Company has done at its two said villages. The Author of this paper has no view in communicating his sentiments upon the matters now in hand, but, from a hearty wish for the prosperity of his native country, to endeavour to put in his mite of service, to the laudable designs of the Society. This is not to be done, by writing fine flowery language, or smooth turned periods, but by faithfully stating his opinion, derived from an experience acquired by a residence in the Highlands. Truth is at all times salutary. Burnished falsehoods, (which have been too much used upon this sub-

ject of the Fishery,) while they dazzle, are sure to blind and mislead.

The Author of this paper left that country some years ago, and before the undertakings were begun at Ullapool. From the information he has received, he finds that very considerable buildings are already erected there ; a pier, an inn, a place of worship, and a school-house, besides a number of small houses for fishers and tradesmen, have been erected by individuals, aided, as we are informed, by the funds of the Company. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon those persons, who set on foot and encouraged this plan, of civilizing and improving that neglected corner of our native country. When we reflect upon the noble motives by which these persons

sons were actuated, it is exceeding difficult to find fault with any thing which has been done under their directions, or to touch upon any thing unpleasant to them. Candour, however, and our professed desire of giving our undisguised opinion, obliges us to observe, that it were to be wished the Company had proceeded more slowly, in the laying out its money, and done some of its works upon a smaller scale, particularly the inn at Ullapool, which is most unnecessarily large. Probably it would have been better, had the Company oeconomised as much as it could, in order that it might be the better enabled to advance the considerable sums which will be wanted for that absolutely necessary measure, of making and keeping up roads of communica-

tion betwixt their villages and the Low-countries.

The establishing some useful manufacture in the villages, and the making of these roads, we look upon as the principal considerations in the whole business of these new erections, *so far as the Highlands is concerned*. The failure of the fishing upon that coast for a tract of years, (as has been formerly known to have happened) would have the effect to draw off all the adventurers in the fishing upon a large scale, which had settled there. The only thing, therefore, which would be left as an inducement to the lower order of people to remain at the villages, would be the manufacture mentioned, and the facility with which they could communicate with

with the Low-country. The poor people who remained, would be thus enabled to carry on some little trade; and, by maintaining their hold, prevent all which the Company shall do from being totally lost, which would otherwise inevitably happen, if the herrings should abandon the West coast for any considerable space of time: these fish have been known to disappear upon that coast, for upwards of twenty years. Thus, roads would be a great benefit to the villages, in case of the worst happening. If the villages are prosperous, roads would infinitely increase their prosperity, by putting it in the power of the lesser fishers in these hamlets, to convey their fish fresh to the towns in the Low-country, where they would fetch great prices. Upon the subject
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of the manufacture proper to be introduced into the fishing villages, we shall reserve ourselves, until we come to speak of the improvements which the inferior parts of the Highlands will admit of; because the kind of manufacture proper to be established there, and the manner of conducting it, will equally apply to the Coasts of the Highlands.

It is a melancholy consideration, when one reflects, that in a country, famous throughout the World for the wisdom and liberality of its civil polity, the maxims which that polity should dictate, are, in the case we are now speaking of, so much departed from, that the settling and civilizing the remote parts of the Empire, is not done under the direction, or at the expence, of the Government

ment of the country, but is laid upon the shoulders of individuals, who, anxious for the public welfare, do it voluntarily out of their own estates, rather than fruitlessly apply for the aid of the State. A Frenchman or a Swiss, would hardly give credit to this relation. In these countries, even when one of them was shackled under an arbitrary Monarchy, works, the carrying on of which would bring advantage to the whole Community, were done at the expence of that Community. Some French authors have, with great success, shown in their writings, that the settling remote parts in a kingdom, and opening communications between these and the more civilized parts, ought to be the business of every well-ordered State.

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But if our Governors are so torpid, as not to trouble themselves about such public services as that we are now speaking of, but to allow the charge of doing it to fall upon the virtuous individuals, whose zeal and anxiety for their country has led them to take the business upon themselves, yet surely they will, for very shame, now that they see so much done, give their consent, that the expence of making these necessary roads, shall be defrayed out of the public purse. This is an event devoutly to be wished for; and the Society, and all the friends of the Fisheries, and of the Highlands, should use their best endeavours to bring it about. It would relieve the Joint-stock Company of a very heavy burden, and lighten the loss, which it is not impossible may arise,

rise, when the Company shall come to balance accompts with these establishments it shall have fostered.

It will cost the minister very little trouble to do this favour to the Company, and this duty to his country. The best way for him to do it, would be to lay a small tax upon the ton of every vessel, employed in the herring-fisheries in Scotland, for the special purpose of making and maintaining these roads; the Company, or a committee of it, to be the trustees, under the act imposing the tax, for seeing the money duly applied. No body would grumble at this tax. A shilling a ton upon the busses, might produce about 800 l. *per annum*, upon the credit of which, the Company might borrow 6000 l. or 7000 l.; a sum,

sum, it is apprehended, sufficient to make the roads at present needed. The roads once made, the tax might be mitigated, except so much as was necessary to keep them in repair. It would be bad policy in the present state of that country, to propose a turnpike upon these roads. We are sensible, that the sum above mentioned is not sufficient to make the roads in question, *and also the bridges* which would be requisite upon these roads; but the making the roads is the first thing to be done; which, if found of utility, there will then be encouragement to build bridges. It may be objected, that a tax upon the buffes would be improper; but as it would be but a small one, and as the owners of the buffes would be much benefited by these roads, it may be supposed they would

would think the payment of the tax no hardship. At present, when a buss has caught as many herrings as will load her, she departs for her port ; and, let the fish be ever so plenty, she can derive no farther benefit from them ; but if the roads in question are once made, the busses will find sale for such herrings as they may catch, after they have made their cargoes ; for not only the country people, but strangers from the Lowlands, will buy their surplus herrings, when they can take them away in carts, which at present they cannot do. Besides this, by means of good roads from the western fishing-grounds, to Inverness, &c., any buss which may come by a misfortune, can be supplied with sails, cordage, &c. from these places, instead of being obliged to go
to

to her port (at the distance perhaps of an hundred miles) for that purpose, by which delay she might lose the fishing for that season.

We have already disclosed our sentiments, that in the present scarcity of market for British herrings, by unnecessarily pushing the Fishery, and lavishing encouragements upon it, an evil may arise to the country instead of a good : for this reason, we think the Joint-stock Company should proceed in their buildings with cautious steps. We do not say that they have already built enow of houses at their two said villages, but our sincere belief is, that it would neither be for the Company's own interest, nor for that of the Community, to proceed very much farther,

ther, until more markets are secured for British herrings. A town in a fertile country, may be supported alone by the residence of gentry in it, a retail trade, and public hostelaries; but, in the Highlands, it is a manufacture or fishery which must support any appearance of a collected society; therefore, instead of expending money upon buildings, which may never be inhabited, or which, if inhabited, will only help to fill the market with a commodity in no great request; we would humbly incline to think the Company should very soon suspend its operations, until the effects of the experiments it is now making shall be a little known. At the same time, we are under no difficulty in saying, that we think the best application of the Company's funds *now*, would be,

first, to encourage some Dutch curers to settle at the two villages, for the purpose of teaching the people there the true method of preserving herrings: And, *secondly*, (if no aid can be obtained from Government) to apply part of these funds to the making and upholding proper roads, betwixt the said villages and the Low-lands. In the present state of the fishing trade, these two measures, in our opinion, are what the Company should direct its principal attention to.

Having said thus much, regarding what the Joint-stock Company have with the most laudable intentions done for this country, it falls next to be considered, by what encouragements the settlements already established by the Company,

Company, may be best preserved during their infancy, and until full time is given to make a fair experiment of their utility.

We shall not hesitate to say, that, in our opinion, the sooner these villages are left to uphold themselves by their own exertions and industry, the better for the Company and the Community. Encouragements do not always produce the good effects they aim at, especially when bestowed by public bodies; although encouragements engage the sober and industrious, they are also baits for the needy, the desperate, and the idle. That industry depends as much, if not more, upon the spirit and disposition of the people, as upon the encouragements held out to them, is fairly

exemplified in the history of the town of Stornoway already mentioned, which has thriven and grown rich, although for a considerable time, and till of late, in the hands of even severity and exaction. At the same time that we say this, we are clearly of opinion, that all the individuals who are already invited, or whom it would be prudent hereafter to invite to these villages, should have liberal inducements held out to them, to remain or settle there. The offering a house and garden to a settler *gratis*, may be an inducement to a wretch, who rather intends to beg than work, and he will be glad of the offer without any farther encouragement; but if the Company wish for industrious men, it must not only offer them a free house and garden, but also

also a boat, nets, &c. upon credit: Even this is not enough: The accomplishment of the Company's purpose (*viz.* keeping the settlers in the villages) will never be brought about, unless it shall find a market at their doors for the fish caught by their settlers. We do not mean by this, that the Company should claim the pre-emption of all fish so caught; on the contrary, the settlers should be encouraged by the Company obliging itself to take from off their hands all such fish as they cannot dispose of, and that, not at an under, but at a medium price. Thus, the Company must for some time be the purchasers of fish: It must do more: for, with the price so given by the Company, to a settler for his fish, he cannot, in the present state of the

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villages

villages and the country, procure the necessaries of life ; therefore the Company, to effect its purpose, must engage itself to supply, at moderate prices, the settlers, at all times, for a certain period of years, with meal, butter, cheese, salt-beef, shoes, linen, ready-made fisher-jackets, &c. and coals, if demanded. Coals, it will be absolutely necessary the Company should provide, for the reasons we have given upon the 96th page of this paper. Without such encouragements are granted to the villagers for some time, we are of opinion, the settlements will only languish, and at last die. It is almost needless here to observe, that the Company, in its mercantile capacity, must provide buildings for sheltering, and also materials for curing such fish as may be so offered

ed by the settlers, as well as store-houses, for the articles of consumption we have mentioned. The Company should not however engage itself to these conditions long. If the Fishery succeeds, and British herrings shall open a market for themselves, by the improvements which may be hereafter made in curing them, the consequent prosperity of the villages will open resources to the settlers for supplying themselves, upon perhaps better terms than the Company could afford.—Upon the whole, we are of opinion, that the Company, while it on the one hand, for the reasons we have urged, proceeds with caution, in not bringing too great a number of people into its villages, it should, at the same time, on the other hand, grant due encouragement to those persons it may be
proper

proper to bring there, to induce them to come to, and remain in these settlements. This last is a measure absolutely necessary, being the only chance for effecting the Company's purpose in any degree at all.

But there is a great difficulty remains, viz. What is to become of such of the settlers as live alone by fishing, if, unhappily (as has been often experienced,) the herrings should desert the coast for some years running. In such a case, it would be impossible for the Company to purchase their continuance at the village, at the dear rate of subsisting them upon the Company's credit all that time, in prospect of being paid by the after fishings of such settlers: Even doing so for one or two years, would

would be too great a risk for the Company to run. We own this is a very great dilemma.

The difficulty here stated, has often employed the thoughts of the Author of this paper ; he has considered it with great attention, and, after the maturest deliberation, he can only think of one thing, which would provide against it : Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to procure it : Its name is, *The Liberality of the Government of Great Britain, to that part of the Kingdom called Scotland.*

As we before noted, the facilitating the improvement of remote and uncultivated parts of any kingdom is surely the proper business of the Government
of

that state or kingdom. It would be fortunate for the Community, if the managers of state-affairs in this country were of a like opinion with us. The building the villages, making the roads, purchasing the fish, and supplying the settlers, ought in good policy to have been done at the expence, and under the direction of Government: If any profit accrued by the business, the public revenue would have been encreased by it: If any loss, it would justly have fallen upon the Community at large. The idea of a Government purchasing herrings from its subjects is not a new one: In England, Edward the 3d did so; and the practice was continued by his successors down to Queen Elizabeth. Should it ever unfortunately happen, that the herring-fishing should fall off,
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owing to there being too many caught for the markets,—from the debasement of the character of our fish, or from other circumstances now unforeseen, a minister would be obliged to have recourse to this measure, if he meant not to lose the strength which is derived to our navy from the numbers of seamen which the Fishery nurses up.

Though we are not sanguine in our expectations, that Government will either aid the Joint-stock Company, to enable it to retain the settlers in the villages during unsuccessful fishing years, or appropriate money for making and maintaining the roads we have been speaking of, yet it is impossible for us to allow ourselves for a moment to think, that any minister of this country
will

will ever go about to endeavour to put a negative upon any motion which may be made for indemnifying the Joint-stock Company for such losses, (if any such there are) which it shall appear, upon taking leave of the said establishments, the Company shall have *bona fide* sustained. The honour and justice of this country would be engaged in this measure, and certainly the representatives of this part of the kingdom in Parliament, will, whether of the minister's party or not, to a man join in support of so just and equitable a proposal.

We have already taken notice of the neglect which every thing relating to this country meets with in the British Parliament : At whose door does this
evil

evil originate? We may charge it upon the indifferency of the English members about Scotch affairs: But candour obliges us at same time to say, that we are afraid part of the evil is chargeable upon our own members, who are rather passive in matters which concern their native country.

While we thus blame Government for being careless about the concerns of Scotland, it is however no more than justice to say, that the extravagant proposals for taking money out of the public purse, for the particular benefit of this country, which has been made, might very probably affrighten ministers at the whole business of the Scotch Fisheries. The Committee of the House of Commons upon the Fishery, amongst

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[other things, which in our opinion would have created a most needless expence, reported to the House, that it was necessary to establish a Board of sub-commissioners of the revenue at Inverness; and that fundry new Sheriffs were necessary in Scotland. Surely these demands had better been let alone: The fact is, that too much has been wrote and said about the Fishery. Every one has it in his mouth; but we may say (we hope without offence or arrogance) that, comparatively speaking, few understand it. Hence the scheme is distracted with the plans of every idle projector, who with his proposals increases the mountain of speculative stuff, and still farther deters those in power from meddling with a business so unshapely. Instead of the
Society

Society therefore advertising for information, we doubt not but it would be more for the benefit of what it wishes to promote, if the Society shall hereafter, without such precarious assistance, think for itself upon the subject of the Fisheries, and the improvement of the Highlands, which most of the members of the Society, from their knowledge of that country, are very competent to do.

Before we leave off concerning the fishing villages, we shall beg liberty to mention to the Society a matter which in our humble opinion deserves its attention.—It is an improvement in the power of the Society or the Joint-stock Company to compass.

Upon the West coast, during the fishing season, when a body of herrings enters one of the lochs, it is not long before the whole fleet of herring buffes follow them. There is not any thing better known by the fishermen, than that herrings are not fond of remaining in a loch where they are molested with the frequent dashing of oars, and too many vessels and boats passing and re-passing; and that accordingly, when thus treated, they soon depart. This evil (and a great one it is) might be easily prevented: We think it would be an object for the Joint-stock Company or the Society, to ask from Government the service of a small Admiralty cutter during the fishing season. On board of this vessel a superintendant should be sent, who should be a man of character, of experience

experience and abilities, and whose orders the commander of the cutter should be obliged to obey. This superintendant's business should be, to judge what number of vessels and boats ought to be allowed to enter any loch, where there is a shoal of herrings. He should be invested with an authority from the vice-admiral of Scotland, to take cognizance of trespasses upon the water, and to commit offenders by his own warrant: His powers should also enable him to determine upon any dispute, which may arise amongst the fishers about the situation of their nets, or other differences. The Author of this paper has been an eye-witness of the necessity of such a measure as he is now recommending: He has seen the crews of the busses from the Clyde &c. at-

tack the poor natives of the West coast in their miserable canoes, drive them from the best fishing places, destroy their nets, cruelly maltreat them, and then let down their own tackling, in the places of which they had thus robbed the poor natives. The superintendant might have the benefit of an assistant, and two or three inferior officers; and, that the public might be as much benefited as possible, in return for the expence which salaries to this establishment would create, both the principal superintendant and his colleague, should be vested with powers to sit and act at the villages, as ordinary judges, in disputes about property, to a certain extent: And, if it was thought necessary, they might be farther intrusted with a power to judge of, and pronounce sentence
upon

upon, lesser crimes committed at the villages and upon the coast.

We are not unacquainted, that there is at present an officer appointed, under the Board of Trustees for Fisheries and manufactures, called *fishing baillie*, with authority to settle disputes amongst the fishers; but we are afraid his powers are too limited, and he has no assistance to enforce the execution of his own awards. It may be proper for us here by the by to observe, that we doubt if, without an express law, the measure of hindering an improper number of buffes from entering a loch into which a shoal of herrings had got, could be defended. But we think the adopting such a regulation is of so much consequence, that it is, *even* in the *present* state of the her-
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ring-fishery, an object to endeavour to get an enactment of the Legislature to authorise it.

It may perhaps be expected, that we should here say something about the the question which has been broached, Whether a deep sea fishing, or a loch fishing, is the best?

After having already declared our opinion, that, by the present modes of fishing, there are at least as many herrings caught as the market demands, it would be an unbecoming task for us to enter upon recommending any particular plan as the *best* for catching herrings; but, for the information of such of our readers as may have perhaps never heard of the question, we shall state as briefly

as possible what occurs to us upon the subject.

Some have vehemently argued for a deep-sea fishing, as infinitely preferable to fishing in lochs. This doctrine, upon which much has been said, affords a very proper instance in proof of our assertion, that more has been wrote upon the Fishery than has been understood about it.

The advocates for a deep-sea fishing quote the example of the Dutch, who fish in this manner. It is very true the Dutch do so: But when we enquire, Why? we find, it is because they have it not in their power to do otherwise with profit. The Dutch have only two choices; that is, either to fish in the

the deep upon the coast of Shetland, or sail through the Pentland Firth, and fish in the western lochs of Scotland. This last would be so long a voyage, and the navigating the difficult strait of the Pentland Firth, so hard for vessels of the construction of their buffes, that this method would not answer them. Of the two evils, therefore, annexed to the situation of their country for fishing, they wisely make election of the least, viz. fishing in the deep-sea, because the shallow fishing-grounds are too far off for them. The Dutch have upon their own coasts no lochs, bays, or in-lets of the sea, to which the herrings resort; they are therefore obliged to seek them in the deep, at double the risk and expence at which they could fish them in embayed shallow places,

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such as the lochs of Scotland. The inhabitants of this country (more especially those upon the West coast) would be extremely unwise indeed, were they to be at the great expence of materials for a deep-sea fishing, and expose their buffes to so much tear and wear, when every purpose they aim at is better answered by their fishing in the lochs usually haunted by the herrings with their short nets, at a less expence by one half at least, laying out of the question the risk of losing both vessel and nets in the winter-time in the open sea; a fate which the Dutch often experience. The Dutch would never hunt the fish through seas, which are sometimes tempestuous even in Summer, were it not impossible for them (with any advantage) to sail to the West lochs
of

Scotland, where (when they should arrive there) we have some doubts if they would be allowed to fish. The deep-sea fishing is not only very expensive and perilous, but also very uncertain; for the herrings, while in deep water, are for the most part in an itinerant disposition. It is well known that owing to this, the Dutch are very often unsuccessful; a fact, which the gentlemen who argue for a deep-sea fishing pass over in silence. It is a strange argument, indeed, that because the Dutch are good fishers, therefore we are to imitate them in all things regarding the Fishery, even in that which they themselves consider as a very *great disadvantage*. The doing so would be as unwise as the conduct of a person, who, wishing to imitate the dress and exterior

rior of some beau, would, in order to conform exactly to his pattern, break a limb, because the person he wished to copy had come by that misfortune.

It may be here proper to observe, that the advocates for a deep-sea fishing, have not only quoted the example of the Dutch, but also that of the Yarmouth people, in instance of this practice. The latter do not however make a choice of that method any more than the former: their doing so is the effect of necessity, because the herrings, which usually appear once a year upon the Yarmouth coast, do not come into shallow water. It is the peculiar advantage of the Highland coast, to be cut and indented all along with in-lets and bays: to these the herrings are fond of

· resorting: on the coast of England, there are no such in-lets: the fish, accordingly, which appear there, keep a considerable way from the shore in deep water, and the fishers must take them there or not at all.

If it shall be said, that the reason given for the Dutch not going to the Highland lochs, cannot be assigned as the cause why the Yarmouth people do not go there, seeing they are almost as near these lochs as some of the fishers on the east of Scotland, who go; We answer, That the Yarmouth people, preferring fishing upon their own coast for herrings in deep water, to going to the West lochs for these fish, does by no means prove that they esteem the deep-sea fishing as superior to the other; it
only

only shews, that the Yarmouth people give preference to that mode, which is not only easiest for them, but also (considering their great distance from the West coast, and the expensive way in which the English victual their vessels) the cheapest. Thus we see, that both the Dutch and Yarmouth people follow that method of fishing which is *best* adapted to their respective situations. The Scotch, by fishing in shallow water, do the same. If these premises are granted, (and we think they must) we are logically entitled to say, that all idea of the fishers of this country adopting any other method of fishing for herrings is precluded; for, being already in possession of the *best*, their choice can go no higher. We shall only farther observe on this branch of our subject,

that however fitting it might be for the fishers on the East coast of Scotland to follow the Dutch and Yarmouth methods, and avoid the troublesome navigation of the Pentland Firth, yet surely no judicious man will say, that the fishers upon the West coast ought to practise the deep-sea fishing. So well aware of the expence and risk of a deep-sea fishing are the East coast herring fishers, that they take their chance of the Pentland Firth, for the sake of the easy and safe fishing, which they find in the lochs to the westward of it. The advocates for a deep-sea fishing recommend their plan to the eastern and western Scotch fishers alike: How improperly they have done so, we have endeavoured to show.

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We shall here beg permission to produce another proof of our assertion, that too much has been rashly wrote and said upon the Fishery. This is exemplified in a person of no less learning and consequence than Dr Adam Smith, who maintained, That Government ought to withdraw the bounty, paid upon the tonage of *busses* employed in the Fishery, and give it to *boats only*, so employed. It is not easy to conceive how such a notion could enter into the head of any man of Dr Smith's abilities and information. We have no way of solving the difficulty, but in supposing that the Doctor has not been *well* informed: He took up a notion, that the buss owners upon the West coast sent out their vessels on *pretence only* of fishing, but in *reality* with an intent *to come at*

the bounty. Certainly in this case Dr Smith drew his conclusions from false premises : for, had he fairly informed himself of the actual cost of the out-fit of a buss, he would have found that such a vessel, equipped according to law, returning into port without any fish, would take every shilling of the bounty to defray her charges : Where then was the temptation to fraud ? No matter : the Doctor would not part with his opinion : He made use of a pun, which he thought settled the business : They don't go out, says he, (meaning the busses) to *catch the fish*, but to *catch the bounty*. Luckily for the country, the Doctor's advice was not wholly taken : He saw the boats encouraged with a bounty, or at least an indulgence equal to it ; but the Legislature prudently continued the encouragements

couragements to the bufs-fishing upon the old footing, where it at present remains. We shall request of our reader to reflect what the consequences would have been, had Dr Smith's advice been taken: no less, we may safely pronounce, than the total annihilation of the trade of fishing in the whole towns in the river Clyde and its vicinity. The giving the bounty to *boats only* was, to be sure, well calculated for the East coast of Scotland, where the Doctor resided, and where, it would appear, he obtained all his knowledge concerning the Fishery; because such herrings as do appear there, come for the most part within a mile or so of the doors of the merchants storehouses; so that boats, in *their* situation, would have answered without any bufses; by which means the whole enormous

normous expence of building, equipping, and manning the latter, would have been saved. This however would not have answered one of the great purposes of granting a bounty to the buffes, viz. breeding up seamen; and therefore the Legislature very properly resisted the proposal. Were a bounty given only to boats, the fishers from Clyde, &c. would be virtually cut off from the benefit of it; because, as the herrings very seldom appear in the neighbourhood of *their* towns, (where their salt and casks are deposited) but at the distance often of an hundred miles from these places, they would be under the necessity, in order to reap the benefit of a bounty upon boat fishing, of fitting out and maintaining large vessels to accompany such boats to the fishing grounds,

grounds, as a kind of floating store-houses and lodging houses for their men. The boat-bounty would not indemnify this expence. The Doctor's measure would therefore in effect have cut off the Clyde fishers from *any bounty at all* to encourage them to fish; which we are well persuaded would have put an end to their attempting it.

Such we see has been the giddiness, with which not only lesser writers, but also the luminaries of commercial research, have run on, in writing and speaking upon the Fishery, a subject, as we have already said, which has been much perplexed by the hideous schemes of false reasoners, and others unqualified to speak properly upon it.

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The lucubrations of the different attempters to set the country right about its Fishery, became at last so voluminous, and their different schemes, none of which hit the point, were so irreconcilable, that the whole formed a jumble, enough indeed to frighten ministers from looking into it; of course it has been partly neglected by them, as a fathomless business; a grand Elixir, always to be attempted, but never to be productive. From the same causes, some moderate and sensible men have drawn nearly the same conclusions; and thus unhappily an object, undoubtedly deserving a due degree of national attention, has not yielded the benefit which might have been reasonably expected to accrue to the country from it.

We

We have now finished all we intended to say respecting the Fishery, throughout which we have regarded truth, either according to our own particular knowledge, or the best of our information; and have given our opinion after a thorough examination of the subject, according to the best of our judgement.

WE shall now close our design, by submitting to the Society, our observations upon the *Utility of making some Establishments in the Interior Parts of the Highlands*, the only requisite of the Society's said advertisement which we believe remains to be spoken to.

OBSER-

The first of these is the fact that the English language is a very young language. It is not as old as Latin or Greek, and it is not as old as the languages of the East. It is a language which has been formed in the last few centuries, and it is a language which is still in the process of formation. It is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the North and the South, and it is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the East and the West. It is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the North and the South, and it is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the East and the West.

The second of these is the fact that the English language is a very much influenced by the languages of the North and the South, and it is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the East and the West. It is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the North and the South, and it is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the East and the West. It is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the North and the South, and it is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the East and the West. It is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the North and the South, and it is a language which is very much influenced by the languages of the East and the West.

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IMPROVEMENT OF THE INTERIOR PARTS
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ADDRESSED TO THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.

THE SOCIETY, it is presumed, are not to be informed, that about thirty years ago, and during the last reign, no less a sum than 3000 l. *per annum* was granted by Parliament for nine years, for encouraging the spinning of yarn and making of linen in the Highlands of Scotland, and for other purposes, for

the benefit of this country. The money, we believe, was granted out of the equivalent, which Scotland, at the Union claimed from England, for subjecting herself to the debts of the latter. The management of this design fell under the Board established in this country for conserving and encouraging its Fisheries and Manufactures: In pursuance of the intention above mentioned, certain buildings were erected at Glenmorrisson in Inverness-shire, and at Loch-broom and Loch-Carron in Ross-shire. Owing to what causes we know not, but at the expiry of the period limited by the act which granted the money, so little was the design of giving it found to be answered, that Government did not think fit to continue the encouragement, and the experiment
has

has never since been again tried. The houses erected for the purposes we have mentioned, which were very expensive (and magnificent for that part of the country) are at this day occupied to various purposes, very different from the original design of them, and present a very melancholy picture to a person of reflection, who shall happen to pass by them. One cannot help feeling some vexation, upon considering that such capital sums have been expended, without producing any of the good purposes for which they were granted. The people of the country, in the neighbourhood of these establishments, know as much at this day, and no more, about spinning, weaving, flax-raising, &c. as they did fifty years ago. Surely (if we may express ourselves so) there has

been bad cookery here ; for, in remote places in the Highlands, where women may be hired at a very cheap rate, *profit*, instead of *loss*, should have arisen from their work. However, the fate of these undertakings is in conformity enough to past experience in things of the like nature : All encouragements, in which third parties must be employed between the giver and the receiver of such encouragements, are less or more liable to the evils of fraud or jobbing ; on which account, every mode of granting public encouragement, whether by the State, or individuals, which draws after it the necessity of erecting buildings for account of the party granting the encouragement, employing agents, clerks, &c. should as much as possible be avoided.

Having

Having said thus much, we are now to propose to the society *our* plan of encouraging the population and prosperity of the Interior Parts of the Highlands.

We enter with real satisfaction upon this part of our design. What we are to propose, we think a practicable scheme, which ought to engage in its behalf every well-wisher of our country. It needs no gilding or false representation to recommend or support it, and a trial at least may be made of it. It would be an impertinent task to enter here into a description of the vast extent of this part of the united kingdom, to which the appellation of Highlands properly belongs. This, as well as the great population of those parts, is perfectly well known

known to every gentleman of the Society. We believe we do not exaggerate, when we say, that the inhabitants of those parts of Scotland, known by the name of the Highlands, make up nearly two thirds of the whole of the population of that kingdom. What a pity it is, that their labours are not more useful to themselves, and the community of which they are members. No people in the world are apter scholars at every thing which may be assigned them to do, or discover more sagacity in the exercise of their reason: They are, for the most part, faithful servants, and prudent judicious masters: The common people are sober and steady, and entire strangers to the dissolute and wretched lives, which people of the same rank, in the more fertile parts of the kingdom, are
known

known to lead: There is not such a contented set of beings in the whole world, (if we except the happy peasants in the vallies of Switzerland) as the small tenantry of the Highlands. Let us here, in support of our observation, bring to the recollection of some member of the Society, the satisfaction and peace he has seen within the walls of some poor Highlander, to whose house he has perhaps been driven by the stormy night. The social fire, the woman of the cottage spinning upon the rock, the spare but wholesome meal in preparation upon the fire for supper, the landlord's little live property secured from the threatening storm in the other end of the cottage, and within view of the owner, who, to cheer his wife and little ones, beguiles the solitary hour with the recital

cital of the atchievements of some valiant ancestor in a song. To find suitable employment for these poor virtuous citizens and their progeny, is surely an object worthy of public attention. Great are the obligations which the Community is under to those patriotic individuals who have generously undertaken this task: we hope that, while they thus serve their country, their laudable zeal will at same time be compensated, by the increase in value which their property must experience in consequence of the measures taken by them.

In the histories of civilized countries, well adapted for cultivation, we find that tillage has usually been the first thing which has occupied the attention

tention of the inhabitants: manufactures and trade came afterwards. On the other hand, in countries less fertile, manufactures and trade, instead of being consequences of an improved state of the country, have themselves been in effect the causes of the cultivation of the soil.

The inland parts of the Highlands of Scotland are not fertile: they are however pretty populous; which circumstance, by due management, might be made amply to compensate both the want of soil and climate. The way in which this is to be done, is, by introducing into those parts some kind of useful manufacture.

The Highlands at present does not reap
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the benefit of its considerable population : there are more people there than the produce of the land can well maintain : they are on that account obliged to wander to other places in quest of employment, and to become a kind of vagabonds upon the earth. What relief, then, so natural, as to find them employment at home, in a manufacture, which if well conducted, would not only make individuals live comfortably, but, by means of the money such manufacture would bring into the country, the soil would be improved, the value of land raised, and employment found for numbers of the natives in agriculture.

Though there are some obstacles in the way of effecting this happy purpose, yet they can be removed at an expence

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nconsiderable, when compared to the advantages, which would be derived from such a measure: The *first* of these obstacles is, that the people in the inland parts of the Highlands are not at present collected into towns or villages; and the *second*, that there are not proper roads of communication betwixt that country and the more populous parts of the kingdom.

Having satisfied ourselves with regard to the practicability of what we have proposed, as well as its utility, we shall proceed to observe to the Society, that, in considering the subject before us, we have no hesitation in declaring, that we question if it would be advisable to attempt a village in any of the interior parts of the Highlands, (or

even if it would be practicable to keep the people together in such village) without some kind of manufacture were established in it. A parcel of poor people, to be sure, might be brought together, allured by the advantage of having a house and a bit of ground *gratis*, or such like encouragements: But what benefit would the country at large derive from such a measure? Even the neighbourhood of a village without a manufacture in it, would have very little advantage by it, farther than the convenience of being near perhaps a small retail shop, or an artificer: part of the earnings of these tradesmen might probably find its way into the pockets of such farmers in the neighbourhood as could spare of their produce to sell to the village: but if every

every shilling so earned was to be spent in the same way (a supposition not very probable) this would not be bringing any money into the country.

Allowing, however, such an intercourse would be an advantage to a neighbourhood, we doubt if a place could be found in the inland Highlands, whose neighbourhood, in its present state, could afford business to support such a village as we have mentioned. In a cultivated country, a town may be up-held by its immediate neighbourhood, or by enjoying the benefit of lying at the entrance to a Highland country; but, in an uncultivated country like the inland Highlands, such an idea is entirely precluded. If a village in the inland Highlands in the present

state of that country, could not be supported by its neighbourhood, it is still less supposable that such village could support itself: Therefore, in our humble apprehension, every idea of erecting a village in the country in question, without establishing a manufacture in it, is a wrong one, and will, we imagine, be found not to answer. We may lay it down as a maxim, in this case, that if a village in the inland parts of the Highlands does not benefit its neighbourhood more than its neighbourhood benefits it, the intention of building such village (*viz.* to find employment for the people, and to improve and raise the value of the land) is not answered. We have seen that a village without a

manufactory

manufacture could not support itself, far less better the country; therefore it is clear, that the erecting such a village would not answer the end which undoubtedly the Society aim at. We may add, that not only ought a village in the country in question to be independent of its neighbourhood, in the present state of that country, for trade to support it; but also measures should be taken to render such a village independent of its neighbourhood, for the chief articles of subsistence; a precaution absolutely necessary for the preservation of a settlement of this kind, until the country around it shall be in some sort fit to supply it with necessaries.

Having thus, as we imagine, sufficiently proven, that the bringing money into the inland Highlands, by means of some manufacture, is the best way in which the Society's great end of employing the people, and improving the soil, can be brought about ; and having also endeavoured to shew, that the erecting villages without establishing such manufactures in them, would fall short of effecting the Society's said purposes ; we come next to propose the kind of manufacture, in our opinion proper to be first so introduced, the scale it should be taken up upon, and the manner, in our opinion, in which it should be conducted.

In considering this subject, we are not perplexed with many choices :

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There are, in our humble opinion, only two manufactures, which, in the present state of the interior part of the Highlands, it would be proper to introduce into these parts. The one the linen,—the other that of the woollen. We have fairly adjusted the balance, and thrown our reasons in favours of each of these branches of trade, into opposite scales : those in favours of the woollen manufacture, soon infinitely preponderated. It behoves us to give some account of these reasons.

In judging of the matter before us, one of our reasons for preferring the woollen manufacture, is, that the Highlands itself affords great quantities of the raw material of that manufacture, the consumption of which, at home, would

would be a great attainment to the Country. Although this circumstance was very favourable, we do not know, (considering the quick market there is at present for wool,) if it would have determined us, had we not been also of opinion, that of the two manufactures mentioned, the woollen was the one of which an experiment could be made in the Highlands, at the least expence; in aid of which opinion, the circumstance of the wool's being ready at hand in the Highlands comes in.

For making a fair experiment of the trade we have been recommending, it is our opinion, that the Society should, (if it does not choose to make the trial at its own expence,) strain every nerve to obtain public aid, to enable it to
build

build a small village upon a favourable spot in the inland parts of some of the Highland counties. Some of the inland parts of Argyleshire are well adapted for such a village ; but as that county has already a deal of trade, and is in a fair way of having more, probably it would be as well to favour some place of less trade, and farther north, with the village ; perhaps some part in the heights of Perth, Ross, or Inverness-shires. The local advantages principally to be secured, in setting down such a village, are so obvious, that it is almost wasting time to mention them. The leading objects are, the choice of a place in the neighbourhood of a sheep country, in a spot capable of improvement, and from whence a road could be cheapest made,

to

to communicate with the nearest seaport.

We shall be extremely cautious in advising the Society to launch out large sums of money upon speculation. We are sensible that the most laudable intentions, for the wisest purposes, and proceeding upon the best grounded expectations, may, and sometimes have been defeated through mismanagements, or the intervention of wayward circumstances, arising out of the concatenated train of events beyond the eye of human foresight. The best way, in our opinion, in cases of the nature now before us, is not to proceed altogether upon mere hypothesis; but where it is in our power, (as in this case it certainly is,) to possess ourselves of some argument

ment derived from fact, as a resting-place in our speculative journey: Having got hold of such a place, we can there breathe a little, and not only look to what is before us, but also to what is behind, and make choice of advancing or retreating as is most convenient.

Now, in this village, so to be built by way of experiment, we would propose, *1st*, To erect small houses for the reception of poor families; the number of these not to exceed fifty, and the expence of each house, not to exceed 25*l*. *2dly*, A better kind of houses, with small shops facing the street, not exceeding the value of 50*l*. each; the number of these we would propose should be fix. *3dly*, Buildings, in which may be carried on the kind of woolen manufacture

manufacture hereafter to be mentioned, to the extent in value of 350 l. ; and a house and offices for the person who shall carry on such manufacture, of the value of 200 l. *4thly*, A house for a dyer, with a dye-house adjoining, together of the value of 80 l. *5thly*, A place of worship, with a small public clock therein ; together of the value of 200 l. *6thly*, A public house of the value of 150 l. *7thly*, A wauk-mill, with a house adjoining for the waulker, together of the value of 60 l. *8thly*, A public Well, of the value of 50 l. *9thly*, A School-house, with accommodations for the school-master, of the value of 70 l. *10thly*, A house for the preacher, of the value of 60 l. And, *11thly*, and *lastly*, a store-house of the value of 150 l. The expence of inclosing with a dry-stone dyke

dyke the small gardens of the settlers we estimate at 50 l; and for inclosing those of the other settlers we reckon 20 l. will be necessary, making together 70 l. We reckon 200 l. would be sufficient to defray the expence of superintending the building of the village, and 500 l. may be stated as the purchase-money of a piece of muir-ground, for the site of the village, and for a small territory about it, upon which it might, if needful, be extended: and we state 460 l. for carrying on any other building which may be found necessary, and for incidents and contingencies; making the whole out-lay for the village the sum of 4150 l.

Having given this abstract of our scheme of building the village, it is

next our business to acquaint the Society with the kind of woollen manufacture we would propose to carry on in it.

The experiments already made in Scotland of manufacturing woollen cloth in the manner of English broad cloth (for what reason we know not,) have not been found to answer, though attempted in the parts of the country best adapted for that purpose. It would therefore be absurd to make trial of it in the Highlands. The kind of woollen manufacture in our opinion best suited to the present state of the interior Highlands, is that one which is not only simplest in its operation, but which also will produce goods easiest sold. In this description

tion we think stockings, and that kind of woollen stuff known by the name of Stirling serge stands foremost. For the *first*, there is always a good demand, not only at home but in the Dutch market; and the latter (though we don't know if it could be exported with profit, except perhaps to America or the the coast of Africa) is yet always in considerable request at home, for linings and other useful purposes. The inland parts of the Highlands is well stored with peat-moss, of which a fuel can be made sufficiently strong for the necessary purposes of this branch.— Therefore, in our opinion, this is the kind of manufacture of which an experiment could be made at the *least expence* in the interior Highlands; and of course, it ought in prudence to be preferred

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ferred as the *first* upon which the experiment should be tried, whether *any manufacture at all* in these parts would answer. In most of the manufactures of this country, coals are necessary; but as these (even although found in the Highlands) could not be obtained but at a very great expence, we should, for the reasons above mentioned, think it very unadvisable, to make the experiment in question upon any manufacture in which the use of that fuel was absolutely necessary. The stockings, we would propose should not be manufactured in the loom, but knitted upon wires, as is practised in the country of Aberdeen-shire: this method is not only best suited to the Highlands, as tending to answer one of the chief purposes of the Society viz. the employing the people;

ple ; but the stockings so manufactured, though not so shewy, are yet more substantial than loom stockings, and have accordingly preference in Holland, which is the best market for stockings we know. At same time, if circumstances justify it, the loom stocking-weaving might be tried.

The next thing for our consideration, is, to fix upon that plan of introducing this manufacture into the interior Highlands, which shall be least liable to abuse or disappointment. We own this is not so easy to judge of: for, on the one hand, we find that to attempt it upon cheap terms would only produce the evils we dread; on the other hand, we find the encouragements necessary to do it to purpose will be a

heavy expence. We have, however, no alternative, as it is clear that that method which shall be found to bring the Society's intentions best about, though most expensive at first, will also be found in the end to be the cheapest, and to it, therefore, we give the preference. The Society's purposes can never be brought about by taking the manufacture into its own hand, and appointing people to superintend and conduct it. Needy or desperate men might offer themselves upon easy terms; but experience shews, that the execution of public purposes, trusted into the hands of such people, has not produced any good; unless administering to the necessities of the parties so employed can be called so. If therefore the Society shall ever think of adopting the measures we are recommend-

mending, if they are to be well served, it must be by persons, not only of character and probity, but of known property.

The encouragements necessary, on the one hand, to procure the services of a person or persons of this description, and the engagements he or they ought to come under in return for these encouragements, on the other hand, is what we shall now state.

To make the Society's intentions in this respect public, the best way would be, to advertise in the newspapers the offers of the Society, which, in our humble opinion, ought to be as follows, viz. That to any person or persons, individuals or companies, conversant in the
woollen

woollen manufacture, who shall satisfy the Society, that he or they are possessed of a capital of at least 1500 l. and who shall be willing to set up the said business in said village, and to come under the conditions hereafter to be mentioned, the Society will procure the following encouragements to be given: *First*, That there shall be paid to such persons, upon the amount of the capital employed by him or them, each and every year, a clear premium of 15 per cent. per annum. *2dly*, That the Society, for the farther encouragement of such person or persons, will procure accommodations to be built for carrying on the said business, and accommodations also for the family of such person or persons, to the extent, together, of at least 550 l.; such buildings to be executed

cuted according to the plan of the said person or persons, but under the inspection of the Society or its agent. 3dly, That the said person or persons, shall, besides these encouragements, be entitled to the exclusive privilege of carrying on the said business in the said village, for the term of fourteen years, during all which time he shall be free of rent for the said buildings, and be entitled to the said 15 *per cent.* and also the other encouragements herein after mentioned. 4thly, That the Society shall engage itself to have always upon hand in the said village, a sufficient quantity of oat or bear-meal, ready to be sold to the people employed in the said manufacture by such person or persons, at the average price which it shall appear from the modes prescribed by law,

law, for fixing the prices which regulate the importation and exportation of victual, such meal shall bear at the time, in the county where the said village shall be situated. 5thly, The Society should offer, for facilitating the trade of such person or persons, to procure, that good and passable roads shall be made between such village, and the sea-port town nearest thereto. 6thly, The Society should offer to procure, that such person or persons shall be accommodated during the currency of the said fourteen years, with a quantity of land rent-free in the near vicinity of such village, sufficient for the maintenance of three horses and two cows; two of the former of which, with a proper waggon, the Society should engage to procure to such person

person or persons *gratis*. For the farther encouragement of such person or persons, the Society should engage itself, that, at the expiry of the said fourteen years, it should be optional to the said person to continue the bargain with the Society for seven years more, with this deduction of circumstances in favours of the latter, that at the expiry of the said first term of years, and during the currency of the said seven years, the said person or persons should not be entitled to the exclusive privilege of carrying on the said manufacture in the said village, nor to any more than 10 *per cent. per annum* upon the sum employed by him or them in each year during the said seven years. And *lastly*, For the still farther encouragement of such person or persons,
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it should be optional to him or them, to continue the bargain with the Society for still seven years more, without any exclusive privilege in favours of the former, and upon a premium of only 5 *per cent. per annum*, upon the sum he or they shall so employ, subject to a deduction in name of rent, of 5 *per cent.* of the sum the buildings and land occupied by such person or persons, shall have cost the Society or the public. For the additional encouragement of such person or persons, the Society should engage itself, that with every apprentice the said person or persons shall take to teach the weaving, dyeing, waulking, or wool-combing, for seven years, the Society will procure to be paid to such person or persons the sum of 50 l. in name of apprentice-fee, upon the master

ter, becoming bound to maintain and clothe, in a suitable manner, such apprentice during the whole time of his said service ; and the Society should farther engage itself to build for the accommodation, of the trade of such person or persons, a dye-house, a comb-shop, and a waulk-mill, together with free houses and gardens, to each of the persons who shall occupy the said works ; and to accommodate, also in like manner, the persons hereafter to be mentioned, which the said person or persons shall by his or their bargain be obliged to bring into the said village for teaching the country people. The Society should at the same time offer, in like public manner, to such persons as are willing to settle in the said village, and to furnish out of
Q their

, their respective families five people able to work at the said manufacture, a house and garden, free of rent for seven years, and to supply such families at all times with meal, at the prices already mentioned. To persons willing to carry on any useful craft, or a retail trade in the village, the Society should offer one of the 50 l. houses and a garden, rent-free for three years.

In return for these encouragements, the Society should, in the *first* place, take such contractor or contractors bound by himself or themselves, and two sufficient securites, in a sum equal to double his or their capital, that he or they shall implement everycondition he or they may enter into with the Society or the public;

Next,

Next, the said person or persons should be taken bound to bring into the said village, and keep there at all times, during the currency of his or their said bargain, ten young women from Aberdeen-shire, and as many weavers of serge from Stirling, the former for the purpose of teaching the spinning of woolen yarn, and knitting of stockings; and the latter, for teaching apprentices the serge-weaving: And also, to bring into the said village, and keep there as aforesaid, four wool-combers, one dyer, and one waulker, for instructing apprentices. Next, the said person or persons should be taken bound, to keep employed, during the currency of his or their said bargain, within the manufacturing-house, the following number of persons in each

of the branches of the manufacture, viz. Eleven serge-weavers, thirty spinners of wool, and as many knitters of stockings, including apprentices and women-learners: In the comb-shop, five wool-combers, including an apprentice: In the dye-house, three dyers, including apprentices; and at the waulk-mill, two waulkers, including an apprentice. And moreover, such person or persons should be obliged to engage himself or themselves, to employ at least fifty of the country people without doors, in spinning wool, or knitting stockings, if as many will accept of employment. At same time, there should be no restraint upon such person or persons, to employ as many more as he or they shall think proper. Such person or persons

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persons should be farther taken bound, to take at least one apprentice each year, during the said fourteen years, to the weaving business; one each third year to the wool-combing; two every fifth year to the dyeing business; and one every seventh year to the waulking: The said apprentices to be natives of the Highlands.

These are the outlines of what appears to us proper to be done, for making trial of introducing the woollen manufacture into the interior Highlands. We do not recollect any farther regulations of consequence, which we imagine would be necessary, except the appointment of some proper person at said village, with a suitable allowance, in

quality of agent for the public, to be a check upon the manufacturer, and to sell the meal to the villagers out of the public store-house. This person ought to be in the commission of the peace, to enable him to decide any little differences which may arise in the village. We might have mentioned sundry lesser regulations, which may be necessary, but they would have only swelled our paper, already perhaps long enough. We have, as we imagine, pointed out the way to avoid the greatest difficulties. When such a village is established for a year or two, it will be easy, by throwing out little baits, to allure small country dealers and others, to come and settle in it; to obtain a share of the money which the manufacture will circulate, will

will of itself be a sufficient inducement to some.

But the greatest obstacle to our scheme yet remains. We have been all along speaking of introducing the manufacture in question into the Highlands, without saying who shall be at the expence of doing so. In treating of the Fisheries, we took occasion to remark, that a business of the nature before us was in our opinion properly the province of the State. We reflect, with almost indignation, upon the waste of money (no less than 27,000*l.* in nine years) which took place in consequence of the plan for carrying on a manufacture in the Highlands in the last reign: What amazing things might have been done with that money by due
ma-

management? but that is not now a matter for consideration: The point is, to endeavour to find out means whereby money could be raised to make the experiment we are speaking of: We do not think it could be made upon a smaller scale than that we have proposed; some will perhaps think the scale proposed too small; but if the scheme is found not to answer, enough of money will be lost, and if it succeeds, it is easy to enlarge the undertaking.

Comparatively small as the sum needed is, yet we doubt if ministers will go into the measure of granting it: It would interfere with the plan of oeconomy which they, it appears, would wish to lay down to themselves: therefore,

fore, in the worst event, we do not think it would be very difficult to raise the sum wanted, by private contribution.

In considering this, there is no plan which it appears to us would answer so well, as for the gentlemen in Scotland, who have landed property in the Highlands, to assess themselves voluntarily in a small pondage upon the real rent of their respective estates, which would raise all that would be needed, without falling very heavy upon any individual. We suppose a fund rather under 10,000 l. would answer for building the village, paying the premium to the manufacturer, the salaries to the minister, schoolmaster, and superintendant, making the road, and storing meal for the

the villagers. There is no doubt, that *no immediate profit* would arise to any individual contributor to this plan, (the proprietor or proprietors of the land in the neighbourhood of the village excepted,) but rather loss; at least, for a long time, no money would come in; though, if the village throve, there is no doubt but in time the subscribers or their heirs would be indemnified: But the consideration, that the object aimed at is not so much *immediate* profit, as the diffusing of general good, (in which even individual contributors may eventually share) will, in the opinion of every well-wisher of his country, more than compensate any *temporary* loss sustained by him in the prosecution of the plan proposed.

After

After all, aid from Government should not be despaired of. The influence of the Highland Society is great, and its exertions no less so: perhaps by strenuous efforts, the sum mentioned, and probably more, might be obtained for the purpose in hand: That this may be the case, we most devoutly wish.

WE have now gone over a good deal of ground, and probably from our manner, as well as our matter, have tired our reader. All we can say is that we
meant

meant well, and shall be extremely happy if any thing we have said will be found useful. The truth we have made our standard ; and in our opinions, as well as in our details have had regard to that alone. We shall conclude with briefly recapitulating our chief topics.



RECAPI-

RECAPITULATION
OF
THE PRINCIPAL TOPICS
CONTAINED IN THE
FOREGOING OBSERVATIONS.

FIRST, we have argued, That there is already as much encouragement given to the Herring Fishery, as, in the present confined sale of that fish, is consistent with the safety of the trade: That before much farther encouragement be given, new markets must be found out, or those already known secured to us by the superiority of our fish: That our herrings, being at present inferior to our great rivals the Dutch,—therefore, the *first*, and almost

R *only*

only encouragement to be given the Fishery for them, is, to bring over Dutch curers into this country, to teach our people their method. This is our opinion as to the Herring-Fishery.

WITH regard to the improvement of the inland parts of the Highlands, we think it very practicable, and that it is an object well worthy of public attention: That the introduction of some useful manufacture would be the best means of attaining that desirable purpose; and that the woollen manufacture is the one best adapted to the inland parts of the Highlands, in the present state of that country.

We have in the foregoing paper said little about the Fishery for cod, ling,
and

and other gray-fish: The people of Scotland can cure these kinds of fish, at least equally well with any foreigners; but there are such prodigious quantities caught by the Dutch, Danes, Swedes &c. that the markets are generally glutted; and besides, these nations undersell us; which they are enabled to do, from the cheap way in which they conduct every thing about the Fishery. There is, however, great room yet to prosecute the Gray Fishery to a considerable extent; for we have a very good market for these fish in the British capital: The encouragements given, through the hands of the trustees for Fisheries and manufactures in Scotland, to that trade, we think are very liberal, as well as the bounty paid by Government upon the exportation of such fish;

and both ought to stimulate adventurers in that way.

CONCLUSION.

WE take leave of the whole subject, by candidly confessing, that the *Fishery itself*, unconnected with the circumstances of its being a nursery for seamen, is by no means so considerable an object as has been imagined. A great deal has been said about our excellent situation for fishing; and there is no body can doubt but our shores are frequented by all kinds of fish. The enthusiasts upon this subject have however forgot, that a great many countries in Europe, especially upon the coasts of the Baltic, are nearly equally well situated for fishing. These people have
argued

argued in favours of unlimitedly pushing the Fishery, in same manner as if there were not a fish to be found upon any of the coasts of Europe, except those of Great Britain. But the egregious folly of such advice is apparent, when it is well known, that the coasts of great part of Europe are as well frequented by fish as ours, and that the natives there can meet us at market, some of them with better cured, and all of them with cheaper fish than ours, to the almost total exclusion of us from any share of the trade — The truth seems to be, that the matter has not been so well digested or understood as was necessary, before it was publicly embarked in: This was owing to too much confidence having been put in the plausible averments, contained in certain writings with which the

public were entertained, some time before the business of the Fisheries was taken up by Parliament: who these writings came from, every one knows, as well as how much the splendid conclusions therein drawn, and the mighty things there promised, have, by experience, since that time been found to fall short.

If therefore those virtuous individuals, who have, from the best of motives, stepped forward in this business, wish to avoid mistake and disappointment, they will read every line of those romantic scribblers, who have proposed *numbers of Fishing Towns*, (nay, some of them, *FISHING CITIES!*) with caution; and, without regarding *their* closet-reveries, *judge for themselves*, and bestow that pains and expence upon the Fishery which it shall have *a good claim to*, and no more.

WE

WE should be wanting to the intention which we have professed, of giving our sincere and undisguised opinion upon the matters in hand, if we should finally conclude these our observations, without recalling to the attention of the Joint-stock Company, what we have said concerning the necessity, which, in our opinion, there is, for that Society endeavouring to find out some other employment besides fishing, for the people who may settle at their new villages upon the West coast. Without this point is attended to, what has been so nobly and generously done by them for that country will be lost: A few years of ill success in the fishing would desolate these villages. This evil strikes at the very root of the Company's good purposes: Indeed, for our part, we do not see how the poor people, who may
come

come to reside in these villages, and who have no other means of subsistence but by the Fishery, can remain there even during the yearly intervals of the fishing seasons: We took the liberty, in a former part of these sheets, to propose a remedy for this inconveniency: It was, that the Company should endeavour to establish some kind of manufacture in those villages: It has been an objection, (and we think it a good one) that upon the West coast, the fisher and the farmer are often one and the same person, by which means justice is not done to either of the professions: But no objection of that sort can be made against the plan of setting up a manufacture in each of the new villages; because, if it is a woollen one, (as we formerly proposed it should be) the work at it would fall to the share of the women of the family,

ly, and not to the men. By means of the money so earned by the women, and the occasional fishing and industry of the men, the families of the settlers would be subsisted during the intervals of the herring-season,—be enabled to live in comfort,—and at last become attached to the village, as a place where they would be always sure of a living. In short, if the Joint-stock Company are to look for success in their laudable endeavours, it is our most sincere opinion, that they must have a very tender care of their new establishments at their outset: All will depend on this. To what purpose will it tend, if the Company should lay out ever so much money, or occupy ever so large an extent of ground, in the erection of buildings? To be sure, a town will be soon produced in that way; but a town, without inhabitants,

tants, will make but a woeful appearance, and do little good to its neighbourhood, or to the country at large. But if the Company shall proceed upon rational principles, and extend its fostering hand to its new establishments; that is to say, take such steps, and make such provisions, as that no poor man, who shall come to reside in these villages, will ever be obliged to leave them for want of employment and subsistence, the Company will soon see these establishments stand upon their own legs, even totally independent of the Fishery. In proportion as the true interest of the new villages is attended to at their commencement, in proportion will they the sooner relieve the Company of the task of providing for them: A collected society is what is wanted upon the West coast above all things.

To

To effect this purpose, the Company have taken the first natural step, *viz.* The laying out and encouraging the building of a town. But surely it requires little penetration, to see that this is only doing the one half of the business; and it requires as little foresight to pronounce, that if the other part (*viz.* Finding employment for the people who may come to reside in the towns) does not shortly accompany the first, what is already done will be lost. But if measures are taken to hold out advantages to poor people to settle at these villages, by assuring them of constant employment, the consequence will be, that these settlements will soon be populous enough.—A Society once collected, will tend to draw more people thereto supply its wants: mutual wants, and mutual dependencies, will unite,
mix,

mix, and increase this society: In a short time, individuals will step in, to share with the Company the benefit of the people's labour, by establishing manufactories upon their own account; and at last, the Company, and the people of this country, may, even in our own times, have the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing these establishments standing upon their own bottom, the Company relieved of their charge, and their aim of civilizing, settling, and improving the West Highland coast, fairly attained, to the comfort and blessing of thousands, and to the everlasting honour of those whose patriotism and virtue first led them to undertake the glorious task of exciting their fellow-subjects, and fellow-men, to activity, and relieving them from the pressure of want. I JA 64

F I N I S.

